ISSUE 217 | AUGUST 2013

DUNGEON®

A Dungeons & Dragons® Roleplaying Game Supplement

DUNGEON®

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ABOUT THE COVER: *Ralph Horsley paints a picture of Baron D'Tabart and his lovely wife, Elena. As you might guess, all is not well with their once-happy marriage. See who wants them brought to ruin in "The Art of Deception."*

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DUNGEON *August 2013*

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Contributing Artists	**Ralph Horsley, Scott Murphy, Chris Seaman, Phill Simmer, Kieran Yanner**
Cartography	**Jared Blando, Jason A. Engle, Mike Schley**
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Unravel the Mystery

By Christopher Perkins

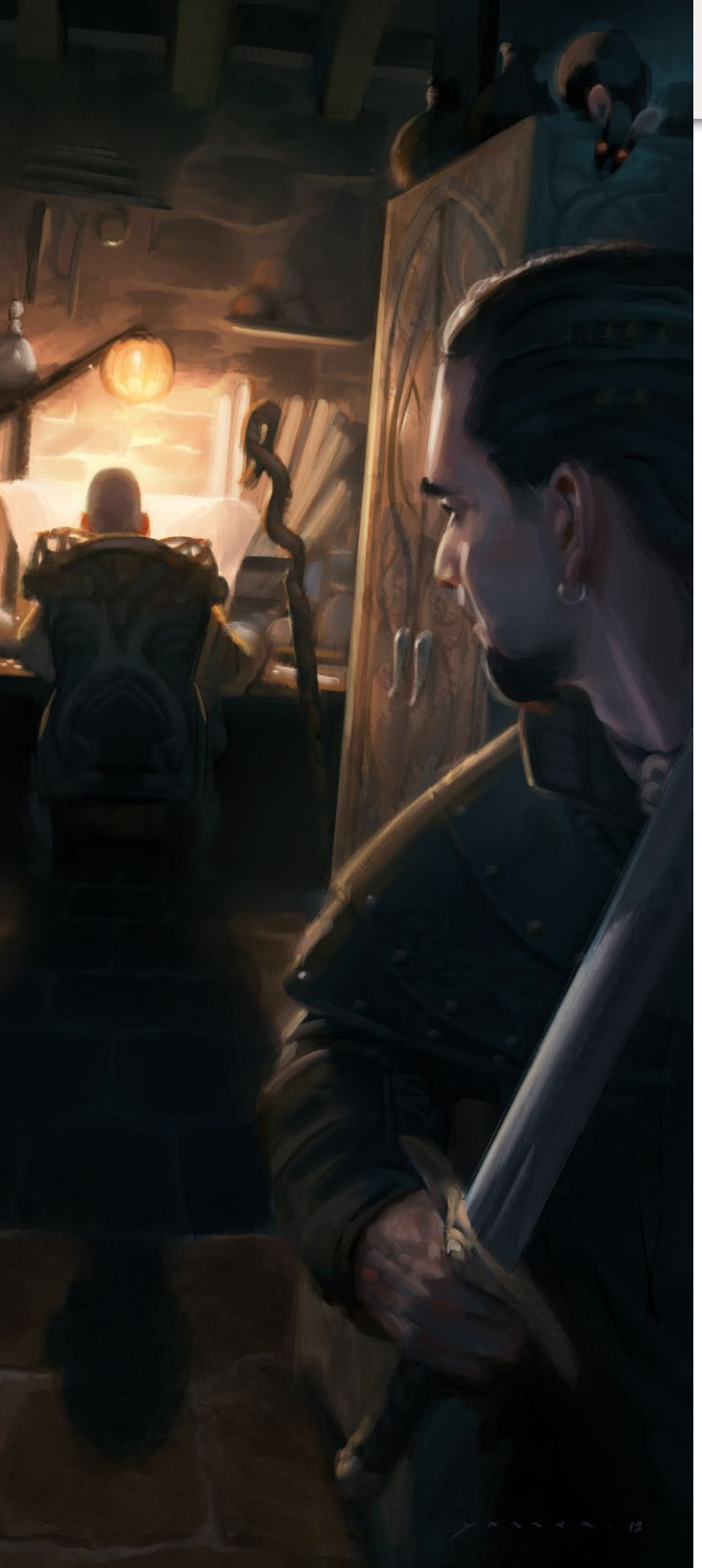
All great adventures have some element of mystery, and to honor this month's theme, we have collected three adventures that present fascinating mysteries for the player characters to unravel. To say any more would undoubtedly spoil the surprise, so I'll simply thank Tim, Craig, and Alexander for making this month's issue such a pleasure to read.

In keeping with this month's theme, our cover illustration for "The Art of Deception" doesn't give too much away. In fact, it raises more questions than it answers. Why is the painting torn, who tore the painting and why, and are those bloodstains or wine stains on the canvas? We really wanted a cover that captured the underlying emotion of the adventure, and, as a change of pace, we wanted something other than a fight scene or a portrait of some villain or monster glowering at us threateningly. I like the diversity of our covers, and I thank Ralph Horsley for capturing not only the beauty of our happy couple—the baron and baroness of Ealding—but also the unseen evil that threatens them.

If you enjoy adventures rife with mystery and intrigue, you'll definitely want to check out *Murder in Baldur's Gate*™, which releases in stores this month. This adventure is designed for use with the D&D® Next rules, the 4th Edition rules, and the 3rd Edition (v.3.5) rules, and statistics for all of the villains and monsters (for all three editions) are posted on the D&D website. It's the adventure we're urging DMs to run in the current D&D Encounters™ season, and it comes with a truly magnificent DM screen illustrated by cartographer Mike Schley. It takes DM screens to a whole new artistic level.

Unlike most D&D Encounters adventures, which are linear and highly structured by necessity, *Murder in Baldur's Gate* gives the DM creative license to take the story in surprising directions and weave what feels like a classic D&D campaign. It demands a bit more work on the DM's part, but we think the players will feel like their decisions can truly affect the flow of the adventure and the outcome. It is our hope that DMs who run *Murder in Baldur's Gate* will find ways to use the adventure even after the D&D Encounters season has ended; the product is rich with story hooks and secrets waiting to be discovered. As the title suggests, there is murder afoot, but the real mystery isn't what the villains are up to, but rather the extent to which the player characters can make their mark in the Realms. Through our Wizards Play Network, we will track the outcomes of the D&D Encounters play experience, and how well your characters do will affect the future of Baldur's Gate and its inhabitants, as well as shape future Forgotten Realms® products and stories.

"Rats in the Undercellar," one of the adventures in this issue, takes a location described in *Murder in Baldur's Gate* and adds another layer of mystery to the place. You don't need one adventure to play the other, but you'll find that they play very well together. I'm curious to know what subscribers think of synchronizing *Dungeon* content to printed product releasing in the same month. Feel free to leave a comment and let us know your opinion on the topic.



Rats in the Undercellar

A D&D® adventure for characters of levels 1-2

By Tim Eagon

Illustrations by Kieran Yanner and Scott Murphy

Cartography by Mike Schley

"Rats in the Undercellar" is set in Baldur's Gate in the Forgotten Realms® setting, and you can easily adapt it to another urban setting. The adventure contains everything needed to run it, but you can refer to the *Murder in Baldur's Gate*™ adventure for additional information.

Background

Rothryn Toth—a gnome illusionist, con man, and fence—needed money and he needed it fast. A business deal with Osgur "the Fetcher" Hallorn, one of the Thieves' Guild kingpins who rule Baldur's Gate's underworld, went sour. When Toth's payments to the Fetcher came up short, the Fetcher sent henchmen to the gnome's abode in the Undercellar, a labyrinth of subterranean chambers and passageways located beneath the Gate's Upper City that serves as a festhall, tavern, and base of operations for the Guild. The gnome escaped harm by creating an illusion of another wizard to distract his assailants.

After that close call, Toth decided for safety's sake to relocate to Waterdeep. Before he could move, he needed to recoup some of his substantial losses, and he desperately wanted revenge on the Fetcher. With his remaining funds, the gnome reached out to contacts in the Feywild and, in the guise of a human wizard, hired a mercenary band of xivort thieves. With the xivorts' ability to communicate with the Undercellar's countless rats, they would eavesdrop on the Fetcher's thugs, overhear their criminal plans, and then commit the crimes first; Toth would rebuild his finances with the proceeds from the thefts while undercutting the Fetcher. The xivorts, ignorant of the criminal politics in Baldur's Gate and fooled by Toth's illusory disguise into believing they were dealing with a human wizard, would unknowingly shoulder the risk. Toth set two conditions on the xivorts so they wouldn't draw attention: they must restrict their activity to the less affluent Lower and Outer Cities, and they mustn't kill anyone.

Toth's role in the arrangement was to fence the stolen goods. Because the xivorts have little use for human gold, Toth had suggested that instead of paying them in coin, he would create for them a small army of humanoid constructs called demos magens. The xivorts jumped at that offer, while Toth planned all along to doublecross the xivorts. The two demos magens that he owned were enough to persuade the xivorts he could do what he claimed, but creating

magens is well beyond Toths' ability. Even if he could create magens, Toth is not so foolish that he would turn such a weapon over to xivorts.

So far, the xivorts have pulled off four lucrative heists, and no one is the wiser. But Toth didn't count on the mettle of their fourth victim, a steely dwarf businesswoman named Margda Silveraxe. Margda would never let criminals victimize her and get away with it, especially when they stole a prized family heirloom. When the Flaming Fist (the mercenary company that enforces law in the Lower City) could not apprehend the thieves, Margda started talking to other robbery victims on her own. Before long, she put out the word that she wanted to hire adventurers to look into the robberies independently of the Flaming Fist.

Adventure Synopsis

The adventure begins when Margda Silveraxe hires the characters to investigate the burglary of her warehouse. She presents a list of other recent robbery victims to them—all targets of the xivorts, though Margda doesn't know that fact—along with the poisoned dart that the robbers used to disable her. Otherwise, she leaves the investigation up to them. The characters can interview the other victims, the Flaming Fist soldiers who initially responded, and a criminal who helped plan one of the original robberies that the xivorts preempted. All the evidence points to the Undercellar.

When the characters visit the Undercellar, they learn that its patrons are abuzz over current events and that they aren't the only ones investigating the situation. Twin brothers named Joren and Belken have been making their own inquiries.

The characters also attract the attention of Osgur "The Fetcher" Hallorn, the Guild's kingpin in the Upper City and the Undercellar. Agents of the Fist are arresting his operatives for the xivorts' crimes. He offers his help to the characters.

The twin brothers, who are actually wererats resentful of the xivorts' influence over the Undercellar's rodent denizens, are the characters' most promising lead. When the characters visit the brothers, they are interrogating a xivort captive. The characters can learn the details of the xivorts' schemes and the location of their lair by allying with the wererats or by rescuing the captive xivort. In the latter case, they won't receive a warm welcome from the xivorts, whose lair contains evidence of Toth's involvement but none of the stolen goods.

Tracking down Toth and recovering the stolen items are the final pieces of the puzzle. At first, the gnome tries to trick the characters into leaving. If that gambit fails, he tries to negotiate with them. Alhough Toth and his servants are reasonably powerful, he's a coward who attacks only as a last resort.

Adventure Hooks

Margda Silveraxe is looking for help investigating a robbery in her warehouse. The characters might learn about her in various ways.

- Margda is well known for giving inexperienced adventurers jobs as caravan guards. The characters might approach her looking for such a job.
- Margda is a respected member of her clan. Her elders, hearing of her troubles, dispatch a dwarf character to help her recover her property.
- A character could be a relation or friend of one of the other victims. In that case, they hear that the same criminals robbed Margda.

Encounter 1: Meeting Margda

Roleplaying Encounter

Margda runs her business from a nondescript warehouse in the Eastway neighborhood in Baldur's Gate's Lower City. The characters can find her there from sunup to well after sundown barking orders to her workers. She's a gruff, bespectacled, middle-aged dwarf woman who eschews finery for modest work clothes and wears her long, steel-gray hair in a simple braid. After the characters announce themselves, she ushers them into her spare office, asks them to sit, and gets down to business. As she talks, she habitually touches her bare neck as if something is missing.

"Two days ago, I was robbed. The villains broke into my warehouse after my workers went home. Knocked me senseless with this." She produces a small dart from her pocket. "When I came to, I was tied up and my head was covered with a sack. If a Flaming Fist patrol hadn't heard me hollering, I would have laid there all night. The soldiers arrested a couple of neighborhood toughs who were lurking nearby, but those lowlifes didn't have my property.

"I can't abide people stealing from me, and let's face it—the Fist can keep the peace, but they're not detectives. I need folk with good heads on their shoulders to do this for me. I will pay you fifty gold pieces each, plus five percent of the value of whatever you recover for me. What do you say?"

Margda gives the characters a few moments to consider her offer. She expects adventurers to haggle, so if characters succeed at a DC 12 Bluff or Diplomacy check, they can finagle up to an additional 5 percent each out of her. After the characters accept the terms, she pulls a piece of parchment from her desk drawer and continues.

"I didn't think what happened to me was all that odd until a friend told me that in the last tenday, three other merchants in the Lower City were robbed in a similar manner. The thieves snuck into their shops at night, knocked them out, and then ransacked everything of value they could find. What's really odd is that, each time, the Fist arrested some petty criminals but couldn't connect them to the burglaries. Four times in a tenday is quite a coincidence, wouldn't you say?"

Margda hands the parchment over to the nearest character. It lists the names, occupations, and addresses of the three other victims in the order they were robbed.

- Rhorg Orlusk, Baker, Ten-Sword Alley, Brampton
- Mira Tully, Apothecary, Trout Run, Eastway
- Delzour Llaerskyr, Jeweler, Sunrise Avenue, Bloomridge

She also passes the dart around so the characters can examine it. It's very small. A successful DC 19 Nature check reveals that the toxin contains exotic compounds native to the Feywild. Margda honestly answers any questions that the characters might have. Here are some sample questions and her possible responses.

What did the thieves take? *"The thieves must have cased my warehouse, because they knew where I kept all of the expensive stuff. They took a strongbox containing several trade bars, a few bolts of silk, several casks of Amnian wine, and a silver pendant—a family heirloom—from around my neck. Above all, I want that pendant back."*

What does the pendant look like? *"It's a small silver disc set with a chartreuse sphere and engraved with two interlocking rings, the symbol of Berronar Truesilver, on a silver chain. The women of my clan have passed this pendant down to their eldest daughters for generations. I had hoped to give it to my grandniece one day."*

How did the thieves get in? *"They opened a shuttered window in the back of the warehouse. I hadn't barred them yet, but I made sure they were latched, and I have no idea how they opened one from the outside. I was doing inventory and before I knew what was happening, they stung me with that damned dart!"*

The xivorts commanded some rats to open the relatively simple latch from the inside. It's immediately obvious to the characters that it would be very difficult to unlatch a shutter from the outside without damaging it.

Can we see the scene of the crime? *"Certainly."*

Margda escorts the characters through the bustling warehouse and shows them where she was when the dart hit her. She's not shy, so she'll even show them the wound on the back of her thigh if asked. She lets them examine the window. It is a few feet off the ground and wide enough for a human to pass through easily. No other clues are in the warehouse, though characters poking around encounter numerous rats, much to Margda's chagrin. She bawls out one of her workers for not setting enough traps. She has no idea that the rodents acted as the xivorts' accomplices.

Do you have any enemies? *"I'm a merchant in Baldur's Gate, so what do you think? Of course, my enemies know I'd never forgive an assault and they don't have the guts to pull something like this. Not even the Guild. No, I think you're barking up the wrong tree."*

Margda honestly believes this statement. She refuses to pay protection money and until recently has never had any issues with theft.

Stolen Items: The xivorts stole four trade bars (50 gp each), but Toth has already used them to finance his move. They also stole three casks of wine (50 gp each), ten bolts of silk (20 gp each), and her pendant (250 gp).

After the characters finish looking around, Margda sees them out. Before they leave, she warns them against making trouble for her and asks that they give her periodic updates. Her subsequent attitude toward them depends on how much progress they're making.

Major Quest: Find the Culprits

1st-Level Major Quest (100 XP per character)
The characters earn this quest reward if they expose Toth's scheme and recover Margda's possessions.

Encounter 2: The Investigation Begins

Roleplaying Encounter

After meeting with Margda, the characters have several avenues of investigation to pursue. The clearest place for the characters to start is with interviewing the other victims.

Rhorg Orlusk

The massive Rhorg, an elderly human baker, was the xivorts' first victim. They robbed his shop, which is located in a poorer section of Brampton, six days before Margda Silveraxe's warehouse. It was a dry run for the xivorts, and it almost spun out of control when they took out their hatred of big folks on him and nearly beat him to death. They also vandalized his shop.

The day the characters visit him is also the day he returns to work. Bruises still cover his swollen, unshaven face, he walks with a noticeable limp, and he often winces due to some broken ribs. Although sullen, the baker is willing to talk to the characters. His attitude improves, returning to his normal joviality, as he bakes his bread.

His story is straightforward. He was behind his shop shooing rats away from his morning flour delivery when he heard a whirling noise and something hit him in the head, knocking him down. His assailants then threw a burlap sack over his head and began to

beat him. Before he lost consciousness, he distinctly remembered one of them saying in Elven (he speaks it fluently), "Better stop. Remember what the boss said." He woke up sometime later after one of his customers found him and summoned the Fist. He thinks they arrested a couple of thugs for the crime.

The thieves stole a small amount of copper and silver coins, several loaves of bread, Rhorg's gold wedding band, and a set of fine porcelain dishes imported from Shou Lung that once belonged to his deceased wife. The burly widower sheds some tears while recounting that particular loss. Other than the unusual violence, not much else is notable about the crime. No other witnesses or clues are to be found.

A little legwork reveals that Rhorg's neighbors and customers love him. They can't believe what happened and urge the characters to help in whatever way they can.

Stolen Inventory: The xivorts stole 10 gp, in addition to the porcelain dishes (100 gp) and a gold wedding ring (50 gp).

Mira Tully

Mira Tully, a skilled young half-elf apothecary, was the xivorts' second victim. She lives and works in a two-story building near the harbor, which the xivorts robbed four days before Margda Silveraxe's warehouse. The robbery left Mira angry, paranoid, and scrambling to fill her customers' orders. When the characters call upon her, she's frantically brewing new herbal concoctions and hasn't slept for days. Her silvery hair is disheveled and her blue eyes are sunken and bloodshot.

Although she's willing to talk, her answers are terse and she's frequently distracted by her work. As she tells it, she was upstairs reading when she heard a skittering noise from her attic. Then her candle guttered out and her unseen assailants entangled her in a net before covering her head with a burlap sack. One then held a dagger to her throat for several minutes before leaving. When Mira was sure they were gone, she ran outside and flagged down the closest Fist patrol. Fist agents later caught a couple of teenagers trying to climb the walls of her shop, but let them go after a good flogging made it apparent they hadn't committed the crime. Mira complains bitterly about the Fist, since they did little else.

The thieves stole two *potions of healing*, several phials of expensive medicine, and her store of rare ingredients, including herbs from Chult that she deems priceless. If the characters ask to see her apartment or attic, Mira insists that she should be working. If they help in her shop for at least an hour or make a DC 12 Diplomacy or Bluff check, she relents. She shows them the apartment but refuses to enter the attic, since "it's full of rats and bats." It also contains several clues. The attic window is ajar and opens from the inside (the xivorts had the rats push it open). The robbers left many small, clawed footprints in the dust (a DC 12 Perception check reveals four sets of tracks). A stolen stall-marker chit is on the floor. Such chits are used to allot spaces in the Wide, the sprawling, open-air market in the Upper City (and also the location of the Undercellar's main entrance).

Stolen Inventory: In addition to the potions, the stolen medicine and herbs are worth 500 gp.

Delzour Llaerskyr

So far, the xivorts' most successful robbery was their third one, which occurred two days before they broke into Margda Silveraxe's warehouse. Their target was Delzour Llaerskyr, a human jeweler operating from his luxurious home in Bloomridge, the Lower City's most upscale neighborhood. Though upset by the thefts, he's particularly despondent over the death of Whiskers, his beloved cat. The xivorts killed the cat as a favor to their rat allies.

During their interview, the sickly jeweler sits wrapped in a blanket and frequently laments the death of his pet. ("The best friend a man could ever ask for . . . now the rats will have the run of the place, whatever shall I do?") His newly hired bodyguard, a grim and silent warrior named Bran, hovers over him and eyes the characters warily.

Llaerskyr relates that he was locking up for the night when he felt a sharp pain in his side, which caused him to faint. He woke to find a burlap sack over his head. He had a dart in his side, and he later found Whiskers's corpse peppered with the same darts. While grief overwhelms Llaerskyr, Bran produces one of the darts. It's identical to the one that Margda Silveraxe showed the characters.

Composing himself, Llaerskyr continues. When he awoke, he went outside and yelled for help. A Fist patrol arrested a couple of suspicious local men. Llaerskyr knew they had arrested the wrong people, since everyone from Baldur's Gate knows it's extremely unlucky to kill a cat. The thieves were unable to crack his safe, but they did steal several loose gems, a couple of trade bars, and some miscellaneous coins.

If the characters make a DC 12 Insight check during the interview, they realize that Llaerskyr is hiding something. If pressed, he tearfully admits that he expected trouble because he fell behind on his protection payments to the Guild. He also knows the men the Fist arrested were Guild enforcers. Nevertheless, he still harbors doubts about their involvement.

Stolen Inventory: The xivorts stole twenty gems (50 to 100 gp each), two trade bars (50 gp), and 100 gp. Toth has already used half the gems, the trade bars, and coins to finance his move. Ten gems remain (six worth 50 gp and four worth 100 gp).

Minor Quest: Avenge Whiskers

1st-Level Minor Quest (20 XP per character)
Llaerskyr mentions he'd like to see those who tormented his cat "given what they deserve." The characters earn this quest reward if they slay the xivort darters who killed Whiskers. In addition, if the

characters provide proof of their deed to Llaerskyr, he rewards each of them with a gem (100 gp).

Future Victims

The xivorts' next robbery occurs the same day that Margda Silveraxe hires the characters. That night, the fey break into a warehouse in Bloomridge owned by a portly halfling furrier named Hugo Underbough and steal an entire shipment of fur coats recently arrived from the North. The next morning, if the characters succeed on a DC 8 Streetwise check or talk with any member of the Flaming Fist, they hear of the robbery. Otherwise, Margda informs them that afternoon.

Hugo Underbough's story is similar to the other victims'. His fear is palpable as he retells it and he frequently looks around nervously while wiping his sweaty brow. The caravan bearing the furs arrived late, so he was still at work. A guard was the only other person in the warehouse. Hugo was inspecting the shipment when he heard a strange whirling noise and then a thump. He went to investigate, but quickly hid when he spied several small, shadowy figures roaming through his warehouse. They talked softly among themselves in a language he didn't understand and one of them made a chittering noise that sounded like a rat. If asked to describe them, he gulps loudly, sits down, and confesses that he didn't get a good look at them. He remembers, with a shudder, only their sinister, glowing yellow eyes.

After they left, Underbough found the unconscious guard (who doesn't remember anything) and summoned the Fist, who did nothing but chase away a couple of petty thieves nearby. Only the furs were missing, and if Underbough can't recover them, he's likely to be ruined!

Unless the characters stop them, Underbough isn't the xivorts' last victim. Every few days, the xivorts strike and slowly expand their activities into the Outer City. You can use the *Murder in Baldur's Gate* DM Screen to generate the shop names and services. All the victims share similar experiences, which should include clues that help the characters identify the perpetrators or steer the party toward the Undercellar.

Stolen Inventory: The stolen furs are worth 500 gp.

RATS, RATS EVERYWHERE

As the characters investigate the robberies, they might discern patterns involving rats and decide to use some means, such as the Speak with Nature ritual, to question them. The rats aren't loyal to the xivorts, though those living in Delzour Llaerskyr's house are grateful the fey dispatched Whiskers. The rats can provide an accurate physical description of the xivorts, but not their motives. The extent of their help involved showing the fey the location of certain objects and people, as well as opening latches.

If the characters do notice the rats, use their presence to increase tension. Since rats are everywhere in Baldur's Gate, their frequent mention should be both appropriate and unnerving.

Minor Quest: Return the Prized Possessions

1st-Level Minor Quest (20 XP per character)
The characters earn this quest reward if they return the porcelain dishes to Rhorg Orlusk, the Chult herbs to Mira Tully, or the furs to Hugo Underbough. They earn the XP for each item returned.

The Flaming Fist

The mercenaries who patrol the Lower City are another obvious source of information. Luckily for the characters, none of the Fist soldiers who responded to the xivorts' robberies have rotated out of Baldur's Gate. The characters can visit the Fist garrisons at the Seatower or Wyrm's Rock and inquire about their current postings. A few hours of inquiries gains the characters the address of a soldier's apartment in Seatower or the name of another's favorite tavern.

The Fist soldiers talk as long as the characters remain respectful and aren't too critical. Most regret being unable to do more, but they had neither the time nor the resources to conduct more than a cursory investigation. Each of their tales is eerily similar.

- They found few clues at the scene. Other than the victims, there were no witnesses.
- Within 1–2 hours of the robberies, the Fist apprehended several persons acting suspiciously near the scene of each crime, although some escaped. They all turned out to be career footpads or local delinquents—the soldiers suspect that many were affiliated with the Guild—and each possessed tools of the criminal trade such as crowbars, ropes, lock picks, and concealed blades. Every one of them had an alibi, though, and the Fist couldn't connect them to the thefts. After giving the miscreants a flogging, the Fist mercenaries released them, even though the soldiers felt they were somehow involved.
- At the time of the robberies, the suspects were patronizing different bathhouses, festhalls, gambling parlors, or taverns. At least one person in each arrested group had visited the Undercellar earlier that night. If asked, the soldiers can provide basic facts about the public face of the Undercellar, but they otherwise don't know much about it. ("That's the Watch's problem" is a common refrain.)
- They give the characters information on how to find the criminals they detained. This grants the characters a +2 bonus to their Streetwise checks to do so.

Word on the Street

The characters can also turn to the streets for information. If they make a DC 12 Streetwise check, they learn one of the following tidbits. They can attempt these checks multiple times.

- A bigwig in the Guild has taken an interest in the thefts and provided a list of the stolen items to the city's fences after the third robbery. He's ordered them to report anyone trying to sell things on the list. No one knows how the Guild obtained the list and so far, no one has tried to sell anything on it.
- A couple of days ago, someone began quietly asking around town about Margda and the characters' investigations. The inquiries seem mostly concerned with what the characters have learned regarding the thefts. No one knows who is making the inquiries—or more precisely, they don't want to know.
- Hoodlums are killing stray cats at night in the Upper City, especially in the neighborhoods near the Wide, and there's growing anger toward the Watch since they haven't captured the culprits. The killers are brutally stabbing the cats and discarding their corpses on the cobblestones.

The Criminals

After their detention, most of the criminals implicated in the xivorts' crimes melted back into the Gate's underworld, making them nearly impossible to find. Still, a few willing to talk remain.

One of them is a teenage burglar named Coll. His experience soured him on a life of crime, and he is now preparing to leave Baldur's Gate and sail up the River Chionthar to start a new life. Finding him requires a DC 12 Streetwise check. If the characters fail the check, they still obtain the information they need but also attract the attention of six ruffians armed with blackjacks and clubs who don't care for strangers sticking their noses where it doesn't belong. The characters can avoid combat with a DC 19 Bluff check, Diplomacy check, or Intimidate check. If the ruffians attack the characters, they're trying only to scare them (as a DC 8 Insight check reveals); if they reduce a character to 0 hit points, they knock the character unconscious. The ruffians flee after half of them are slain or knocked unconscious. Killing them brings the swift response of the Fist soldiers. It's obvious to the Fist that the ruffians were trying to scare the characters, so, if the characters killed any of them, they'll need to pay some hefty bribes or call upon powerful friends to escape the city's harsh justice.

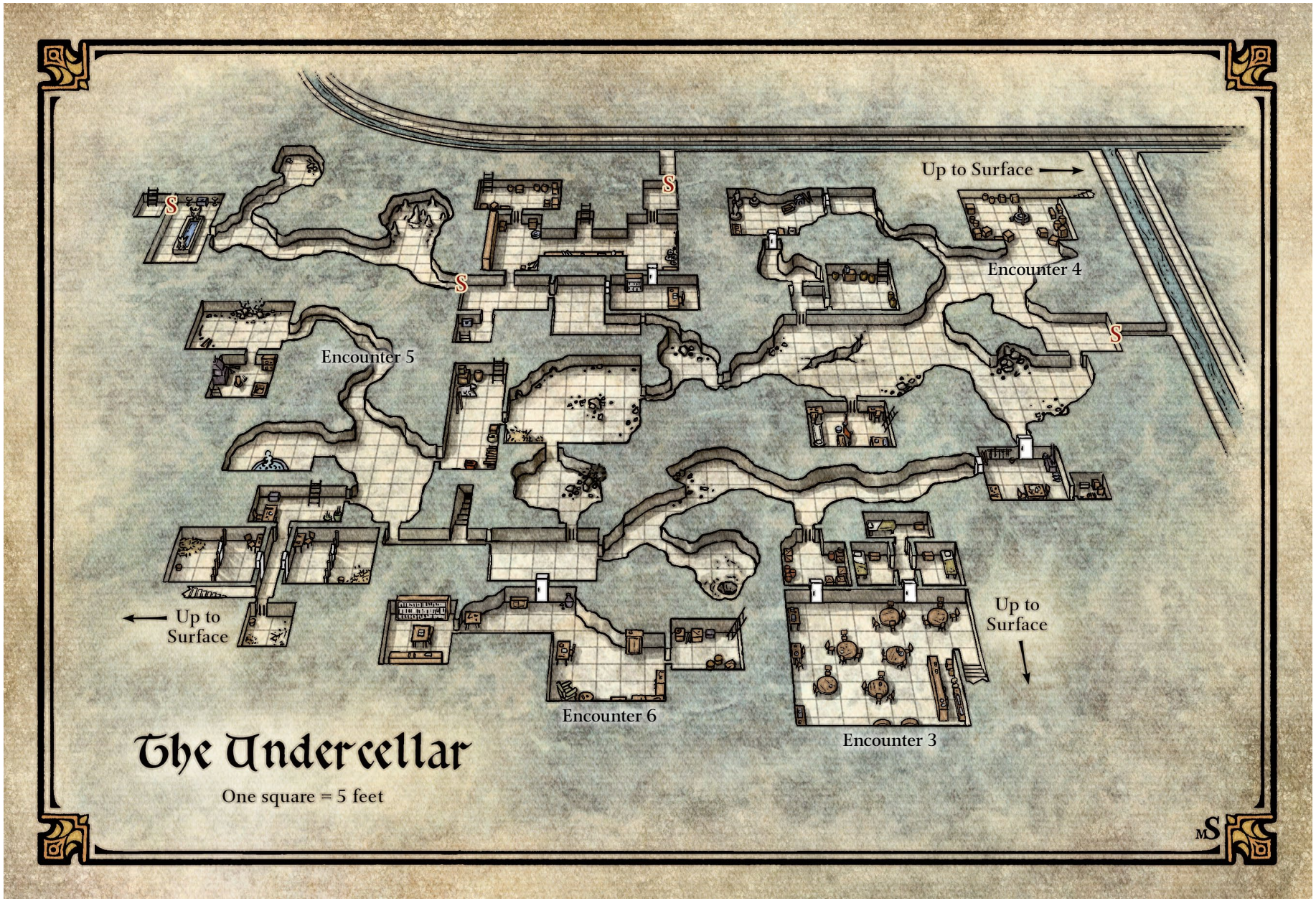
Human Goon	**Level 2 Minion Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 31
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +3
AC 15, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 11, **Will** 11	**Perception** +2
Speed 6	
Traits	
Mob Rule	
While at least two other human goons are within 5 squares of the goon, it gains a +2 power bonus to all defenses.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Club** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 5 damage.	
Str 14 (+3) **Dex** 11 (+1) **Wis** 12 (+2)	
Con 12 (+2) **Int** 9 (+0) **Cha** 13 (+2)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common	
Equipment club	

When the characters find Coll—a lanky, barefooted youth with a tousle of dirty blond hair and freckles—he's milling around the docks looking for passage on a barge. So far, he hasn't had any success and has caught a cold. He's desperate to leave the Gate, so he'll talk if the characters give him 5 gp and some proper clothing, or if they make a DC 12 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check.

Coll tells his story in between coughing and sneezing fits. He's an orphan from the Outer City who supported himself by begging and committing petty crime. Eventually, he attracted the attention of some Guild footpads, who recruited him for his climbing skills, and he became an accomplished second-story man. Several days ago, a friend nicknamed Magpie enlisted him for a new job : the robbery of Mira Tully's apothecary. The two of them met with a man named Nizgur at the Undercellar to plan the crime. It was supposed to be a simple burglary: Coll and Magpie would climb up to the attic, let themselves in through a window, and then enter Tully's shop to steal a list of items provided to them by Nizgur. (The list included potions, medicines, and herbs, but Coll can't read, so he left those details to Magpie.)

Nothing went according to plan. Coll met Magpie at the appointed time (his friend had been playing dice all night at the Undercellar), but no sooner had they began to climb the wall of Tully's shop than a patrol of Fist soldiers grabbed them. The soldiers harshly interrogated Coll and his friend for several hours about an earlier robbery at Tully's shop, which seemed to have followed their plan almost exactly. They wisely kept their mouths shut. After the would-be thieves received a flogging, the Fist let them go. The ordeal left Coll shaken and he suspected that Nizgur set him up, so he resolved to leave the Gate and seek his fortune elsewhere. He hasn't seen Nizgur, Magpie, or any other Guild member since.

Coll knows nothing of the xivorts or the other crimes, but if the characters ask him about rats, he sheepishly admits to having fed cheese and a bit of bread to one while planning the robbery. After he has told his story, he takes his leave and continues his search for passage upriver.


Up to Surface
Encounter 4
Encounter 5
Up to Surface
Up to Surface
Encounter 6
Encounter 3
The Undercellar
One square = 5 feet

Encounter 3: Into the Undercellar

Roleplaying Encounter

The characters' investigation should eventually point them to the Undercellar, a seedy festhall and tavern constructed among the interconnected cellars of the Upper City's buildings. Despite its reputation (or perhaps because of it), the Undercellar is a popular establishment. Visitors to its cobbled, vaulted chambers can enjoy good food, strong drink, games of chance, and the company of "sociable friends," all with an expectation of privacy and far from the prying eyes of the law, since neither the Watch nor the Fist police the Undercellar. Its apparent proprietor—an affable man named Heltur "Ribbons" Ribbond—maintains order with the assistance of a coterie of hired thugs known as "the Cellarers."

That's the public face of the Undercellar. In truth, its extensive maze of tunnels and interconnected chambers sprawls beneath the Upper City, and the Guild controls most of the complex and the dozens of concealed entrances leading into it. In addition, its lack of official oversight has turned it into a haven for the Gate's criminals, since they can safely meet and plot within its walls. Some have even established Guild-approved offices in various private chambers (this is how Rothryn Toth came to live and work there).

The clearly marked public entrance to the Undercellar lies on the southern edge of the Wide, Baldur's Gate's largest and most famous open-air marketplace, at the bottom of a flight of stone steps. Ribbons keeps the heavy oaken doors shut at all hours, but the Undercellar never closes. If the characters knock, one of the Cellarers opens it and ushers them inside.

When the characters first enter, read:

The narrow flight of darkened stairs ends in a spacious, dimly lit common room. A couple of iron braziers and an array of flickering candles provide the scant illumination. Most of the two dozen or so patrons sit around one of the many wooden tables furnishing the room, conversing among themselves in hushed tones as they drink, eat, and gamble, while a pair of professional companions gaily flits about offering their services. A long wooden bar dominates the wall nearest the stairs, and a gaunt, bearded man with a smile plastered on his face stands behind it serving drinks. He greets you with a friendly, "Well met!" Six warriors dressed in leather armor and armed with truncheons stand watch and silently observe the room.

If the characters are visibly armed, two of the guards begin to shadow them from a distance. Otherwise, the Cellarers maintain a hands off approach to security, but react swiftly if a patron becomes excessively rowdy or tries to exit through one of the common room's two other entrances without the proper escort. They beat these unworthies unconscious and then dump them in an unmarked passageway. One of the other entrances leads deeper into the Undercellar, and the other leads to a trio of suites used by the "sociable friends."

The robberies in the Lower City are a hot topic of conversation among the Undercellar's normally tight-lipped patrons and staff, but directly questioning them yields few results. The direct approach doesn't work and invites the Cellarers' wrath if the characters are persistent, but not before they first receive a friendly warning from a smiling Ribbons. The characters can gain information in several other ways, including the following methods.

Eavesdropping: The characters can simply listen to the conversations of the other patrons. A DC 14 Perception check allows them to overhear one item from the rumor list. They must also make a DC 12 Bluff check to conceal their snooping. If they fail, the DC of subsequent Perception checks increases to 19. Each character can make this check once every 15 minutes.

Making Friends: The characters can loosen the tongues of the other patrons by impressing them with a DC 12 Bluff check, Diplomacy check, or Intimidate check; buying a round of drinks beforehand grants them a +2 bonus to the roll. Afterward, their new friend invites them to sit and divulges one item from the rumor list. Each character can make this check once every 15 minutes.

Gambling: Characters with the necessary funds can join one of the Undercellar's many ongoing games of chance. DMs can have the characters play actual card or dice games, utilize the alternate gambling rules from *Dragon* 398, or simulate the game by wagering on the results of a d6 roll; typical wagers are 1–2 gp each. The other players engage in small talk throughout the games. Every three hands, the characters overhear one item from the rumor list. The characters can stay in the games as long as they have money to bet.

The Rumor List

Recent events dominate the hushed exchanges of the Undercellar's patrons. Here are some snippets of conversations that can provide characters with pertinent information. DMs can roll a d6 or choose from the list.

1. *"Did you hear that someone broke into Vug Gorkul's shop and trashed the place? If that half-orc catches whoever did it . . . well, it ain't going to be pretty!"* If the characters are in a position to ask, the patron explains that Gorkul is an herbalist who sells medicaments, liqueurs, and poisons from a chamber in the Undercellar. Slyth, the xivort captured by the wererats, vandalized his shop before falling into their clutches.
2. *"I hear that the Fetcher is plenty mad about what's happening in the Lower City. Not only is his business*

suffering, but his boys keep getting pinched by the Fist." A DC 12 Streetwise check identifies the Fetcher as a criminal and rumored Guild agent operating out of the Undercellar. He controls a small army of spies and thieves throughout Baldur's Gate.

3. *"Joren and Belken were in here again the other day, asking about the Fetcher's problems in the Lower City. They give me the creeps. I'm sure they're somehow involved and trying to stay one step ahead of him."* If the characters inquire about the brothers, they learn that the two are small-time thugs who live in one of the Undercellar's tunnels. If pressed for details, the patron replies, "They're an odd pair, kind of funny looking, and they have this weird thing for rats."
4. *"Honor among thieves . . . please. It ain't safe to talk business with folks anymore. I don't want anyone stealing my plans and getting rich off my sweat, like what's happened to the Fetcher."*
5. *"Shifty swears he saw a blue demon with glowing eyes down in the tunnels. I told that ninny to sober up."* No one has seen Shifty for a few days. The xivorts killed and ate him after he went looking for the blue demon again.
6. *"Ribbons asked me to find him a bunch of cats. The rat problem is getting out of hand again!"*

Other Inquiries

While visiting the Undercellar, a few other leads warrant looking into.

Rats: To the chagrin of the proprietor Ribbons, rodents lurk in the common room's shadows. A successful DC 8 Perception check is all that it takes to find one. After observing the rats, a character who succeeds on a DC 12 Nature check perceives that they're acting strangely. They approach the patrons too readily and linger far too long. If the characters can find a way to communicate with them, they learn that they're spying on behalf of their "blue friends."

Ribbons doesn't allow rituals or spellcasting in the common room. Characters wishing to use rituals or spells need to leave the premises or rent a private suite (at 5 sp per half hour).

Nizgur: Characters who talked to Coll might want to find his erstwhile employer. Though Nizgur is a regular here and a confidante of the Fetcher, no one has seen him for several days. (The Fetcher exiled him to the Outer City as punishment following the failed Tully robbery.)

A Sit-down with the Fetcher

As the characters finish their investigation in the Undercellar—or if they become frustrated by its pace—a large gang of street urchins bursts through the door that leads deeper into the complex. The urchins approach the characters and demand they follow them since "the boss wants to talk to you." If asked, they reply that their boss is the Fetcher. Although the glowering, knife-wielding youths appear threatening, the characters can decline their invitation without further incident. If they accept, the urchins guide them through the Undercellar's twisting tunnels (passing Toth's laboratory) to the Fetcher's richly appointed office.

When the characters enter the office, read:

An obese, middle-aged man clasping a crystal goblet of red wine in his huge hand sits in a plush chair behind a large cedar desk. A drooping walrus mustache hangs beneath his beaky nose. Dark, messy curls cover half his scalp and an old burn scar covers the rest. Though he wears fine clothes, they're rumpled and sweat-stained. He rises from his chair with the help of an ornate walking stick and greets you with a jovial smile. "My name is Osgur Hallorn, but most call me the Fetcher. I hear we have some mutual interests that I thought we should discuss. Come, sit."

The Fetcher flops back into his chair, which creaks under his weight. You hear several meows; a dozen or so cats perch above you on an unlit lamp wheel. One large calico jumps into the Fetcher's lap and purrs contentedly.

A few urchins linger. When the characters have taken their seats, Fetcher offers them wine. He maintains a friendly demeanor and gets down to business:

"I've heard that you've been looking into some unfortunate events in the Lower City. Well, I'd like to help you in any way that I can. Why? Well, the Fist has mistakenly blamed some of my boys for those crimes and I can't in good conscience keep letting that happen to innocent youths, can I?"

The Fetcher steadfastly denies that his boys were planning to rob anyone, unconvincingly insists their arrests were simple coincidences, and doesn't particularly care if the characters believe him. He wants to hear what they've learned during their investigations. Since he doesn't expect the characters to trust him, he's not offended if they withhold information or mislead him. Though he's unaware of Toth's schemes (at this point, he barely remembers the gnome), the Fetcher suspects that the leak originates from within the Guild and wants the characters to investigate certain leads that he has judged too risky to pursue himself: specifically, the wererat twins Joren and Belken. He knows that they've also been investigating the crimes, though he's not sure why. Yesterday, one of his boys reported that the wererats tried to bribe him with one of Delzour Llaeskyr's stolen gems (which they took from Slyth).

When characters finish, the Fetcher says more:

"I think I can help you. You might have heard about some twin brothers who live down here; their names are Joren and Belken. Well, they're little more than street thugs, but they've been nosing around too, though not as deftly as you. One of my boys told me that they tried to bribe him yesterday with a ruby! I'm sure they just didn't find it lying on the flagstones down here."

The Fetcher hides the fact that the twins are lycanthropes (a DC 19 Insight check reveals he's hiding something). He tells them how to reach the twins' hideout and promises that no one will interfere with their investigation. The characters can leave at any time. As they go, the Fetcher reminds them that they can always call upon him for help, raises his glass, and toasts to their success with a hearty laugh.

Encounter 4: The Warrens

Roleplaying Challenge or Combat Encounter
Level 3 (700 XP)

By the time the characters finish dealing with the Undercellar's denizens, they'll likely want to talk with Joren and Belken. The identical twins work as enforcers, though only the Fetcher knows what they actually are. As payment, the Guild allows them to live in a secluded chamber in the Undercellar. The characters can find it easily by following the Fetcher's instructions. If the characters declined his help, the Undercellar's other inhabitants can give them directions, and Ribbons grants them admission with a wry smile. (Everyone hates them and would reveal their location out of spite, but the Fetcher put out word to help the characters in this regard.)

The twins' interest in the robberies is motivated by their hatred of the xivorts. The wererats are the self-proclaimed rulers of the Undercellar's rat population, and they view the fey as threats to their authority. They know someone is onto their scheme and are trying to find out whom before they strike back. To that end, they recently captured a xivort named Slyth, who had earlier vandalized Vug Gorkul's neighboring shop. They've been torturing the xivort ever since.

Light: Bright (torches in brackets).

Monsters: 2 scurrying wererats, 4 dire rats, 1 xivort slasher.

Perception DC 14 (as the characters approach the chamber): *You hear a high-pitched squeaky voice cry out, "Who hired you!" in Common; the voice echoes strangely.*

When the characters enter the lair, read:
Gnawed wooden crates and pallets of dirty straw fill this chamber. At its center is a well surrounded by a crumbling stone wall. A flight of stairs leads upward to a wooden door.

When the characters enter, Joren and Belken are standing in their hybrid forms next to the well, while the dire rats peer hungrily over its edge. They've imprisoned Slyth at the well's bottom and are in the process of interrogating him. When they notice the characters, the wererats spin around and hiss menacingly but don't attack immediately. The commotion prompts Slyth to begin screaming "Help!" in Common and Elven. Joren steps forward and orders the characters to leave. Unless the characters comply or come up with a good reason to stay, the wererats attack. They concentrate on driving the characters away and don't pursue them if the characters retreat.

Crates: The crates are difficult terrain and grant cover.

Stairs: The stairs are difficult terrain. The door at the top of the landing is locked (DC 19 Thievery to open) and Belken carries the key in his pocket. It leads to a warehouse owned by the Guild.

Well: The crude masonry encircling the dry well is 3 feet high. The shaft is 30 feet deep, and creatures falling into it take 3d10 damage. Climbing the well requires a DC 15 Athletics check. The winch still works and can support approximately 50 pounds.

Treasure: The twins keep their treasure hidden in one of the crates. It consists of 100 gp in assorted coinage, a level 2 magic item coated in grime, and Slyth's possessions, which include four daggers, a short sword, and a pouch containing three gems stolen from Delzour Llaerskyr worth 50 gp each

(among them is a fire spinel that the Fetcher's man mistook for a ruby).

Development: If the characters think fast and make a DC 12 Bluff check, Diplomacy check, or Intimidate check, they can forestall the wererats' attack; if they mention they're working for the Fetcher or are investigating the xivorts' robberies, they gain a +2 bonus to their roll. After the characters convince them that they're on the same side, the wererats assume their human forms—short, ugly men with beady eyes, dark, oily hair, and thin mustaches—while the disappointed dire rats return to gazing longingly down the well.

The jittery twins finish each other's sentences as they explain that they are looking for allies to help them fight the xivorts (or as they angrily call the fey, "the usurpers"). They've pieced together the xivorts' scheme and can fill the characters in on any remaining details. They also know the location of the xivorts' lair. The only thing that they haven't figured out is who hired them, which is why they're interrogating Slyth—without much success. Based on their observations, they're convinced the xivorts' boss is another Undercellar inhabitant. They refuse to accompany the characters until they learn the mastermind's identity (they don't want to cross the wrong person).

If the characters ask to talk to Slyth, the wererats oblige, though they refuse to release him (they plan to eat the xivort for his impudence). The miserable fey is wracked by filth fever, hunger, and thirst, but he refuses to cooperate. When he does respond to questions, his answers are laced with obscenities, threats, or demands for his release. In truth he knows little more than the twins, though he has seen "the boss" (as the xivorts call him) and describes him as "a big folk like you, but with red hair." He also knows that the xivorts don't keep the loot in their lair; instead, "the boss" meets them each morning at the entrance to their home and exchanges any stolen items for gold trade bars.

2 Scurrying Wererats **Level 3 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger), human XP 150 each

HP 37; **Bloodied** 18 — **Initiative** +7
AC 17, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13 — **Perception** +7
Speed 6, climb 4 (rat or hybrid form only) — Low-light vision

Traits

Regeneration
The wererat regains 5 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. When the wererat takes damage from a silvered weapon, its regeneration does not function on its next turn.

Standard Actions

⨁ **Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The wererat must be in human or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 6 damage, or 2d6 + 6 if the wererat has combat advantage against the target.

⨁ **Bite** (disease) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The wererat must be in rat or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 1d4 + 4 damage. If the target is granting combat advantage to the wererat, it also takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends). At the end of the encounter, the target makes a saving throw. On a failure, the target contracts wererat filth fever (stage 1).

Move Actions

Rat Scurry ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The wererat must be in rat form.
Effect: The wererat shifts up to its speed.

Minor Actions

Change Shape (polymorph) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The wererat alters its physical form to appear as a Tiny rat, or a Medium unique human or hybrid.

Skills Bluff +6, Stealth +10

Str 10 (+1)	**Dex** 18 (+5)	**Wis** 12 (+2)
Con 15 (+3)	**Int** 13 (+2)	**Cha** 11 (+1)

Alignment evil — **Languages** Common
Equipment dagger

If the characters slay the twins, Slyth can provide the same information, though he first expects his rescuers to bind his wounds, provide him with medicine, and give him food. The duplicitous fey claims that "the boss" tricked his desperate and hungry people into stealing for him. If any characters are aware of the xivorts' tragic history, he plays on their sympathies. He now wants nothing more than to go home. Slyth offers to guide the characters to his people's lair so they can discuss matters with Savax, their leader. Naturally, he turns on them at the earliest opportunity.

Wererat Filth Fever Level 3 Disease

Those infected by this disease waste away as they alternately suffer chills and hot flashes.

Stage 0: The target recovers from the disease.
Stage 1: While affected by stage 1, the target loses a healing surge.
Stage 2: While affected by stage 2, the target loses a healing surge. The target also takes a -2 penalty to AC, Fortitude, and Reflex.
Stage 3: While affected by stage 3, the target loses all healing surges and cannot regain hit points. The target also takes a -2 penalty to AC, Fortitude, and Reflex.
Check: At the end of each extended rest, the target makes an Endurance check if it is at stage 1 or 2.
8 or Lower: The stage of the disease increases by 1.
9–12: No change.
13 or Higher: The stage of the disease decreases by 1.

4 Dire Rats **Level 1 Brute**
Small natural beast XP 100 each

HP 38; **Bloodied** 19 — **Initiative** +2
AC 13, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 11, **Will** 9 — **Perception** +5
Speed 6, climb 3 — Low-light vision

Standard Actions

⨁ **Bite** (disease) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 5 damage. At the end of the encounter, the target makes a saving throw. On a failure, the target contracts dire rat filth fever (stage 1).

Skills Stealth +7

Str 14 (+2)	**Dex** 15 (+2)	**Wis** 10 (+0)
Con 18 (+4)	**Int** 2 (-4)	**Cha** 6 (-2)

Alignment unaligned — **Languages** –

Dire Rat Filth Fever	Level 1 Disease
Those infected by this disease waste away as they alternately suffer chills and hot flashes.	

Stage 0: The target recovers from the disease.
Stage 1: While affected by stage 1, the target loses a healing surge.
Stage 2: While affected by stage 2, the target loses a healing surge. The target also takes a –2 penalty to AC, Fortitude, and Reflex.
Stage 3: While affected by stage 3, the target loses all healing surges and cannot regain hit points. The target also takes a –2 penalty to AC, Fortitude, and Reflex.
Check: At the end of each extended rest, the target makes an Endurance check if it is at stage 1 or 2.
7 or Lower: The stage of the disease increases by 1.
8–11: No change.
12 or Higher: The stage of the disease decreases by 1.

Xivort Slasher	Level 1 Skirmisher
Small fey humanoid	XP 100
HP 26; **Bloodied** 13	**Initiative** +4
AC 15, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 13	**Perception** +1
Speed 5	Darkvision
Standard Actions	
Short Sword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage.	
Dagger (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 5/10 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d4 + 3 damage.	
Triggered Actions	
Cunning Step ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the slasher is hit by an attack.	
Effect (Free Action): The slasher shifts 1 square.	
Shadow Step (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the slasher hits it.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The slasher teleports to another square adjacent to the triggering enemy.	
Skills Bluff +5, Stealth +7	
Str 13 (+1) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 12 (+1)	
Con 10 (+0) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 11 (+0)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven	
Equipment leather armor, short sword, 4 daggers	

Encounter 5: The Darkest Reaches

Combat Encounter Level 4 (925 XP)

After Toth hired the xivorts, they entered the Undercellar through a fissure that connects the complex to the Underdark and made the chamber they found their lair. Savax, the band's shadow caller and leader, used magic to make it feel more like home.

Light: None.

Monsters: 3 xivort darters, 2 xivort net casters, 2 xivort slashers, and 1 xivort shadow caller.

When the characters approach the lair, read:
The rough-hewn tunnel appears unnaturally dark. Shadows seem to cling to everything and the dank air is noticeably cooler. Even in the dim light, you can see that rubble and garbage chokes the passageway.

Except for Toth, the xivorts haven't had any visitors and aren't expecting trouble, but they still post guards. Two xivort darters hide 20 feet up the tunnel. If they detect the characters (the darters do so automatically if the characters carry a light source), they begin to hurl darts (likely with surprise) and shout an alarm before retreating deeper into tunnel.

Tactics: The xivorts attempt to trap the characters in the tunnel and employ ranged attacks against them. The net casters use their bolas to knock down the front ranks so the characters can't provide cover to their allies. Outside the tunnel, the xivorts use hit-and-run tactics, focus on disabling the characters, and take advantage of the favorable lighting conditions. Since they particularly hate goliaths and half-orcs, they try to attack members of those races first. If the characters retreat, the xivorts pursue them into the adjacent chambers but no farther. The xivorts fight as long as Savax lives. If he is killed, they try to flee back to the Underdark.

3 Xivort Darters	Level 1 Artillery
Small fey humanoid	XP 100 each
HP 22; **Bloodied** 11	**Initiative** +2
AC 13, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 13	**Perception** +1
Speed 5	Darkvision
Standard Actions	
Dagger (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d4 + 3 damage.	
Dart (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 5/10 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 1d4 + 3 damage.	
Dart Volley (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The darter uses *dart* twice.	
Dream Venom Dart (poison, weapon) ✦ **Encounter**	
Attack: Ranged 5/10 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 1d4 + 3 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).	
Triggered Actions	
Darter's Step (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the darter hits it.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The darter teleports 2 squares.	
Str 13 (+1) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 12 (+1)	
Con 10 (+0) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 11 (+0)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven	
Equipment dagger, 4 darts	

Reinforcements: After the darters raise the alarm, Savax emits a piercing, high-pitched squeaking noise as a free action, which summons a scurrying rat swarm. The rodents appear at the beginning of the next round at the mouth of the tunnel and fight to the death or until Savax is slain. In addition, if Slyth accompanies the characters, he immediately turns on them.

Coal Bin: The empty coal bin provides cover to anyone inside it.

Fissure: Medium creatures need to squeeze to pass through the fissure, which descends 30 feet to a natural tunnel beneath the Undercellar. The tunnel leads farther into the Underdark.

Furniture: If a creature that can't see enters a square containing furniture, it falls prone. The xivorts can make DC 8 Strength checks as minor actions to shove the furniture into an adjacent square.

2 Xivort Net Casters	Level 1 Controller
Small fey humanoid	XP 100 each
HP 26; **Bloodied** 13	**Initiative** +3
AC 15, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 13	**Perception** +1
Speed 5	Darkvision
Traits	
Cruel Slasher	
The net caster gains a +2 bonus to damage rolls against prone, immobilized, slowed, or restrained enemies.	
Standard Actions	
Short Sword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage.	
Net (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Area burst 1 within 5 (creatures in the burst); +5 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The target is restrained (save ends).	
Minor Actions	
Bolas (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +5 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The target falls prone and cannot stand up until the end of the net caster's next turn.	
Triggered Actions	
Shadow Step (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the net caster hits it.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The net caster teleports to another square adjacent to the triggering enemy.	
Str 13 (+1) **Dex** 16 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+1)	
Con 10 (+0) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 11 (+0)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven	
Equipment leather armor, short sword, 2 bolas, 4 nets	

Rubble: The rubble is difficult terrain. If a creature that can't see the rubble enters its square, it must make a DC 12 Acrobatics roll or fall prone.

Tunnel: Medium creatures need to squeeze when moving through the tunnel.

Unnatural Darkness: Within the tunnel and the two chambers occupied by the xivorts, bright light becomes dim light, and dim lights are extinguished. Additionally, the radiuses of any light sources are halved.

Upstairs: The ladder in the smaller chamber leads to the first floor of a house in the Upper City.

2 Xivort Slashers	Level 1 Skirmisher
Small fey humanoid	XP 100 each
HP 26; **Bloodied** 13	**Initiative** +4
AC 15, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 13	**Perception** +1
Speed 5	Darkvision
Standard Actions	
Short Sword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage.	
Dagger (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 5/10 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d4 + 3 damage.	
Triggered Actions	
Cunning Step ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the slasher is hit by an attack.	
Effect (Free Action): The slasher shifts 1 square.	
Shadow Step (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the slasher hits it.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The slasher teleports to another square adjacent to the triggering enemy.	
Skills Bluff +5, Stealth +7	
Str 13 (+1) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 12 (+1)	
Con 10 (+0) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 11 (+0)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven	
Equipment leather armor, short sword, 4 daggers	

Its new owners are renovating it, so during the day, workers are busy in the house. Savax's magic has convinced the workers that the cellar is haunted, so they avoid it at all costs. At night, the house is unoccupied, allowing the xivorts easy access to the city.

Treasure: Each xivort carries 1d10 sp and 1d6 gp. Savax also wears a silver circlet in the shape of bat with outstretched wings worth 75 gp and carries a *bag of holding* that Toth loaned to them so they could transport bulky loot. In addition, the shadow caller has tucked a bronze amulet (worth 5 gp) and a letter written by Toth in Elven into his belt pouch. It reads:

"Savax, use this amulet to control the magens. I will show you how when the first batch is ready for delivery in less than a tenday, but for now attune yourself to it. –Toth"

Xivort Shadow Caller	Level 2 Artillery (Leader)
Small fey humanoid	XP 125
HP 32; **Bloodied** 16	**Initiative** +2
AC 14, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13	**Perception** +5
Speed 5	Darkvision
Standard Actions	
Dagger (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d4 + 4 damage.	
Shadow Phantoms (fear, implement, psychic) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +7 vs. Will, with a +1 bonus per creature adjacent to the target	
Hit: 1d8 + 4 psychic damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of the shadow caller's next turn.	
Deathmark Bolt (implement, necrotic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚅ ⚄ ⚃	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +7 vs. Will	
Hit: 1d8 + 4 necrotic damage, and one of the shadow caller's allies adjacent to the target can make a melee basic attack against the target as a free action.	
Shadow Strangler (implement) ✦ **Encounter**	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +7 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The target is immobilized and takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends both).	
Triggered Actions	
Shadow Step (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the shadow caller hits it.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The shadow caller teleports to another square adjacent to the triggering enemy.	
Str 11 (+1) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 11 (+1)	
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 17 (+4) **Cha** 16 (+4)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven	
Equipment dagger, wand	

The amulet is powerless, but Toth enchanted it so it radiates a magical aura.

The xivorts store their profits in the empty coal bin. They've wrapped what appears to be ten golden trade bars in dirty cloth. The bars are actually iron ingots; a character examining the "trade bars" with a passive Insight check of 19 or higher notices something is amiss. It requires a DC 19 Insight check as a minor action to disbelieve the illusion.

Development: Captured xivorts aren't cooperative until the characters discover the truth about their

Scurrying Rat Swarm	Level 1 Skirmisher
Medium natural beast (swarm)	XP 100
HP 27; **Bloodied** 13	**Initiative** +5
AC 15, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 11	**Perception** +4
Speed 6, climb 2	Low-light vision
Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks; **Vulnerable** 5 to close and area attacks	
Traits	
☼ **Swarm Attack** ✦ **Aura** 1	
Any enemy that ends its turn in the aura takes 4 damage, and the swarm can slide it 1 square as a free action.	
Swarm	
The swarm can occupy the same space as another creature, and an enemy can enter its space, which is difficult terrain. The swarm cannot be pulled, pushed, or slid by melee or ranged attacks. It can squeeze through any opening that is large enough for at least one of the creatures it comprises.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Swarm of Teeth** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 + 3 damage, or 1d10 + 8 if the swarm moved at least 2 squares during this turn.	
Effect: The swarm can shift 1 square.	
Str 12 (+1) **Dex** 16 (+3) **Wis** 9 (-1)	
Con 11 (+0) **Int** 1 (-5) **Cha** 7 (-2)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

"trade bars." After the illusion is broken, the xivorts howl in anger (their shrieks grow louder when they realize that their army of magens was also a lie) and vow revenge against Toth. Only Savax knows Toth's actual name. The xivorts reveal the location of their boss's laboratory if the characters allow them to return to the Underdark. None of them knows he's a gnome, since they've seen him only in his human guise.

If no xivorts survived, the characters can call upon the other inhabitants of the Undercellar for information. When presented with the illusory gold or Savax's note, the Undercellar's patrons quickly identify Rothryn Toth as the most likely culprit. They know him as a redheaded gnome instead of a human and provide the characters with directions to his chambers (they also warn that he's a powerful wizard). The Fetcher even offers to take care of things for the characters with the intent of collecting the stolen goods for himself, but he defers to the characters if they wish to pursue the matter to its conclusion.

Killing or driving off the xivorts ends the crime spree and encourages Toth to flee Baldur's Gate.

Encounter 6: One Last Rat

Roleplaying Challenge, Combat Encounter Level 2 (650 XP), and Trap/Hazard (125 XP)

By the time the characters decide to confront Rothryn Toth, he has already heard about what happened to his xivort allies (word travels fast in the Undercellar) and is hastily preparing his getaway. Toth is not evil, but he is incredibly self-interested and cowardly. Simply killing the characters is unappealing. Instead, he first tries trickery, then bribery, and only turns violent as a last-ditch effort (or if the characters attack him).

Toth occupies a trio of interconnected chambers in the Undercellar, which he uses as a workshop, study, and library. He also rents the house above. He has placed an arcane lock effect on the otherwise-unremarkable reinforced wooden door that connects his chambers to the Undercellar (DC 22 Thievery or Strength check to open); it has AC 5, Fortitude 10, and 30 hit points. In addition, if anyone other than Toth touches the door, a magic mouth activates and in an apologetic voice loudly announces, "Mr. Toth is out at the moment. Please come back later. I'm very sorry for your inconvenience." Characters who listen at the door and make a DC 13 Perception check can hear the muffled sounds of people moving around; however, no one ever answers the door.

Light: Bright (floating globes of magical light provide illumination; Toth can extinguish them as a free action).

Monsters: 1 gnome illusionist, 1 pseudodragon, 2 demos magen sentinels.

Trap/Hazard: 1 glyph of warding.

Gnome Illusionist	Level 6 Artillery
Small fey humanoid	XP 250
HP 57; **Bloodied** 28	**Initiative** +5
AC 20, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 18	**Perception** +4
Speed 5	Low-light vision
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Gnarled Staff** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage.	
✲ **Bedazzle** (illusion, implement, radiant) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +11 vs. Will	
Hit: 2d6 + 5 radiant damage, and the target grants combat advantage (save ends).	
✧ **See Me Not** (illusion, implement, psychic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅	
Attack: Close blast 3 (enemies in the blast); +9 vs. Will	
Hit: 2d6 + 10 psychic damage, and the target cannot see the gnome (save ends).	
Move Actions	
There, Not There (illusion, teleportation) ✦ **Encounter**	
Effect: The gnome teleports up to 5 squares and creates two duplicates of itself within 5 squares of its destination space. The duplicates last until the gnome attacks or until they are destroyed. Each duplicate has 1 hit point and the same ability scores and defenses as the gnome. The gnome can use its actions to have a duplicate act in any way it could, except that the duplicates cannot use powers and cannot flank.	
Minor Actions	
Veil (illusion) ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The gnome can disguise itself and up to three allies within 5 squares of it to appear as any Small or Medium creatures. A creature can see through the disguise with a successful Insight check opposed by the gnome's Bluff check.	
Skills Bluff +13, Stealth +12	
Str 10 (+3) **Dex** 14 (+5) **Wis** 13 (+4)	
Con 15 (+5) **Int** 18 (+7) **Cha** 20 (+8)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven	
Equipment robes, gnarled staff (quarterstaff)	

Pseudodragon	Level 3 Lurker
Small natural beast (reptile)	XP 150
HP 40; **Bloodied** 20	**Initiative** +9
AC 17, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14	**Perception** +8
Speed 4, fly 8 (hover)	
Standard Actions	
Bite ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 4 damage.	
Effect: The pseudodragon flies up to 4 squares. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.	
Sting (poison) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature that cannot see the pseudodragon); +6 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 1d8 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
Invisibility (illusion) ✦ **Recharge** when the pseudodragon takes damage	
Effect: The pseudodragon becomes invisible until it hits or misses with an attack.	
Skills Insight +8, Stealth +10	
Str 8 (+0) **Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 15 (+3)	
Con 16 (+4) **Int** 9 (+0) **Cha** 17 (+4)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Draconic	

When the characters open the door, read:
The door opens into a large, irregularly shaped room, sparsely furnished with a mismatched collection of trunks, tables, and a battered wooden cabinet. A desk pushed up against one of the walls has a thick book lying open atop it. Next to the desk is a plush chair covered with brightly colored pillows. An open door is to your right, through which you can see what appears to be a library. Several small crates sit atop a reading table, half-filled with books.

Passive Insight of 22 or higher: *The wall to your left seems to waver for an instant.*

Any character who notices something is wrong with the wall can make a DC 22 Insight check as a minor action to disbelieve the illusion.

2 Demos Magen Sentinels	Level 2 Soldier
Medium natural animate (construct)	XP 125 each
HP 38; **Bloodied** 19	**Initiative** +5
AC 18, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 14	**Perception** +8
Speed 5	
Immune charm, disease, fear, poison	
Traits	
Threatening Reach	
The sentinel can make opportunity attacks against enemies within its reach.	
Standard Actions	
Halberd (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 + 5 damage.	
Effect: The sentinel marks the target until the end of its next turn.	
Sweeping Cut (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied	
Attack: Close burst 1 (enemies in the burst); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 + 5 damage, and the target falls prone.	
Triggered Actions	
Ever Vigilant (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy marked by the sentinel makes an attack that doesn't include the sentinel as a target.	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The sentinel uses *halberd* against the triggering enemy. If the triggering attack targeted its controller, the sentinel gains a +2 power bonus to its attack roll and damage roll for this attack.	
Magic Absorption ✦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: An arcane attack hits the sentinel.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The sentinel gains 10 temporary hit points.	
Skills Athletics +9	
Str 17 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 15 (+3)	
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 9 (+0) **Cha** 10 (+1)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common	
Equipment scale armor, halberd	

If a character disbelieves the illusion, read:
The wall dissolves. In its place is an open archway leading to a small room filed with stacks of boxes and crates. A ladder ascends above the clutter to a trapdoor in the ceiling.

Toth uses his *veil* power to disguise himself and his recently purchased demos magen sentinels. Wasp, his pet pseudodragon, perches invisibly on the back

Glyph of Warding	Level 2 Trap
Object	XP 125
Detect Arcana or Perception DC 15	**Initiative** –
Immune attacks	
Triggered Actions	
Attack (radiant)	
Trigger: A creature touches the object bearing the glyph.	
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Close burst 3 (creatures in the burst); +5 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d6 + 3 radiant damage.	
Special: Once the glyph is triggered, it disappears and cannot be triggered again.	
Countermeasures	
✦ **Disable:** Thievery DC 15 (standard action). *Requirement:* The character must be adjacent to the glyph. *Success:* The character disables the glyph. *Failure (14 or less):* The character triggers the trap.	

of the plush chair. Toth makes the magens look like staff-wielding human brothers sporting jet black hair and purple robes, while he assumes the form of a beautiful moon elf maiden possessing long blue hair, striking violet eyes, silvery robes, and a slender wand. At the start of the encounter, Toth sits in the chair. One of the magens stands next to him while the other positions itself near the illusionary wall. The gnome attempts to confuse the characters and convince them to leave, but they can penetrate his disguises by making an Insight check opposed by his Bluff check.

When the characters enter, Toth stands up in his elf guise and scolds them in a melodious voice: "How dare you enter my home! Is this how the Undercellar greets its newest residents?" Toth claims to be Xandra Moonflower, a transmuter recently arrived from Evereska. The two magens are her apprentices, brothers named Deleth and Prambar. According to "Xandra," Toth rented these chambers to her and left Baldur's Gate yesterday heading for Amn ("he said he had family in the Snowflake Mountains"). Toth adopts an imperious attitude and refuses to let the characters search the chambers. If they become aggressive or refuse to leave, he threatens to turn them into toads or worse. If the characters leave, Toth

decides that he has had enough and immediately flees through the trapdoor with whatever he and his magens can carry.

If the characters don't believe Xandra's bluster or penetrate the illusions, Toth and the magens assume their natural forms (Wasp stays invisible). Toth is a balding, middle-aged gnome with an unkempt crown of fiery red hair; stress has made him haggard and he frequently grumbles about his stomach ulcers. At this point, Toth's only interest is survival. He immediately apologizes, says he regrets his actions (which is true at this point), and ultimately tries to shift the blame onto the Fetcher. He tells the characters anything they want to hear and offers to return all the stolen items if they let him go—plus, he'll allow the characters to take anything of his they want! If it looks like the characters are going to turn him over to the Fist (or even worse, the Guild), Toth decides to attack.

Tactics: Toth's only goal is to escape, and he's willing to sacrifice his minions to do so. The magens obediently position themselves between the characters and Toth to facilitate his escape, while Wasp takes flight, stays invisible, and stings or bites whoever attacks his master first, delaying if necessary. For his part, Toth blinds as many characters as possible with *see me not* before using *there, not there* to teleport behind the illusory wall. Toth and Wasp try to escape up the ladder and into the Upper City; once on the surface, the illusionist uses *veil* to assume another identity and disappear in the crowd. If Toth cannot escape or becomes bloodied, he surrenders and pleads for mercy. Wasp and the magens fight to the death unless Toth commands them otherwise.

Cabinets: The cabinets are empty, since Toth moved their contents into the crates.

Ceiling: The ceilings in the chambers are 15 feet high.

Crates: Crates provide cover. They contain a mixture of books on various arcane subjects as well as glass laboratory equipment. The crates in the room concealed by the illusionary wall contain the items stolen by the xivorts.

Desk: The book atop the desk is Toth's personal ledger. Written in Elven, it reveals that he lost a large sum of gold to the Fetcher in a recent business deal. The desk contains quills, bottles of ink, and sheets of parchment.

Ladder: The ladder is quite rickety and requires a DC 10 Athletics check to climb. It is trapped with a *glyph of warding* that unleashes a blast of prismatic energy if anyone other than Toth or his allies touch it, destroying the ladder in the process.

Tables: Small creatures can move freely under the tables, gaining cover by doing so. A combatant can hop onto the tables with a DC 10 Athletics check, gaining total cover against enemies under the table (and vice versa). A table can be flipped as a minor action with a DC 14 Strength check, in which case any creature can stand behind it to gain cover against attacks originating from the other side.

Trapdoor: The trapdoor is arcane locked (DC 22 Strength or Thievery check to open); it has an AC of 5, Fortitude 10, and 20 hit points. Toth and his allies can freely open it.

Trunks: The trunks are unlocked and hold Toth's clothes and mundane belongings.

Treasure: Toth lost the majority of his wealth to the Fetcher, but a level 3 magic item is hidden inside the cushions of his chair and one of his trunks contains two *potions of healing* taken from Mira Tully and a single 100 gp trade bar.

Concluding the Adventure

What happens to Rothryn Toth is up to the characters. If he escapes or they let him go, he flees Baldur's Gate forever. If they turn him over to the Fist, he's given a perfunctory trial and is sentenced to the Seatower's dungeons; if they hand him over to the Fetcher or the wererats Toth is never seen again. Depending on how they parted, the illusionist might seek the characters out in the future . . . either for help or revenge.

Margda Silveraxe and the xivorts' other victims are extremely grateful to the characters if they return the stolen property. In addition to paying what she owes them, Margda promises them future work and enthusiastically recommends them to her friends and colleagues, as do the other merchants. The Fetcher also sends his appreciation; one of his urchins delivers a bouquet of yellow roses with a handwritten card that simply states, "I hope we can help each other again in the future!" Until the characters cross the Guild, they'll have an easier time gaining access to the Undercellar—especially since they've discovered so many of its hidden entrances.

As for the fissure leading to the Underdark, the Fetcher has it collapsed, or so he claims. Perhaps he's lying to the Undercellar's other inhabitants, none of whom are eager to verify his deeds. If so, he might need adventurers to explore what lies beneath the Undercellar.

About the Author

Tim Eagon is a freelance writer in living in Madison, Wisconsin. His other recent articles include "The Ecology of the Swordwing" (*Dungeon* 204), "Ye Olde Creature Catalog" (*Dragon* 418), and "Court of Stars: Thrumbolg" (*Dragon* 420).

A Rhyme Gone Wrong

A short D&D® adventure for characters of levels 3-5

By Craig Campbell

Illustration by Kieran Yanner

Cartography by Jared Blando

A long-slumbering archfey named Felsa has placed the adults in the small hamlet of Thistledown under a sleeping curse. The children of Thistledown couldn't be happier. With their parents asleep, they can run and play all day long, with no rules or chores getting in the way. Unknown to the children, however, Felsa is slowly draining their parents' life forces to build her own power.

The adventurers must awaken the parents and return life to normal in the sleepy hamlet.

Background

The boggle poem (as presented in *Monster Vault™: Threats to the Nentir Vale™*) has long been a favorite of Thistledown's children, who chant it almost daily during play.

Boggle comes and boggle goes,
Steals your rings and stamps your toes.
Turn around the compass rose,
Where it went to, no one knows.

Taught by their parents that such rhymes hold a sort of magic, the children secretly wished for a similar poem that would make their parents stop giving them chores and let them play instead. Felsa, the Slumbering Queen, heard their collective wish while they slept, visited them in their dreams, and taught them the following verse.

We call upon the sleepy queen
Who lives in hidden forests green,
To keep our parents from the sun,
So that we can have some fun.

When the children recited the new verse together ten days ago, Felsa sent a bit of her essence—a scion—to help the children set up the necessary magical foundation for her charm. The scion, masquerading as a nine-year-old girl named Lillin, taught the children another verse, which they promptly recited.

Felsa hears our friendly words.
She loves us, so she calls some birds
To touch our parents while they sleep,
And put them into slumber deep.

That night, a flock of magpies arrived in the hamlet, and the children let the birds into their homes. The

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birds pecked the adults while they slept, putting them into a deep, magical sleep.

The next day, Lillin taught the children a third verse, which they happily recited.

While we sing and run and dance,
The slumbering queen has the chance
To cull the light of those at rest,
And send their souls to farthest west.

This third verse magically linked their sleeping parents to Felsa in her forgotten palace in the Feywild. Because they are so young, the children don't truly understand the implications of the last couplet. Through the magic of this last rhyme, Felsa has begun draining life force from the adults while they sleep. She hopes that adding these stolen life forces to her own will enable her to awaken from her centuries-long slumber.

The process takes time and cannot be rushed. The children have an idea how to end the spell (see "Discovering the Truth") and might do so if they discover that their parents are in real danger. So for the past week, Lillin and her magpies have been encouraging the children to have fun and not worry about their sleeping parents, in hopes that the youngsters will notice nothing amiss until it is too late.

Felsa, the Slumbering Queen

Felsa is a powerful archfey queen who sought to conquer the Feywild many centuries ago. As her power and holdings grew, several other archfey banded together to kill her. But the wily queen foresaw their impending attack. Knowing that she could not defeat the group, Felsa bound together her mind, body, and spirit with a powerful enchantment. When the assault began, instead of falling to her enemies' attacks, she fell into a deep slumber. Realizing that Felsa's spell prevented them from actually killing her, the attackers hid her palace from detection with their own powerful magic and left her to dream alone.

Felsa has been slumbering now for many centuries. Although her body is asleep, her mind is quite awake. She regularly traverses the dreams of other creatures, using her fey powers to grant the dreaming wishes of those she believes could help further her own goals. With her mastery of enchantment and necromancy, Felsa can easily bring mortals under her sway and drain their life forces while they sleep to aid her own recovery.

Felsa's Scions

Whenever she desires, Felsa can send a small bit of her essence into the world to help achieve her goals. The scion she created to infiltrate Thistledown was a fragment of her own childhood made flesh and blood. She chose this form because she felt that the children of the hamlet would more readily accept the help of another child. Since the scion is a bit of Felsa's childhood essence, it speaks and acts like a child.

Synopsis

The adventure consists of four events.

Event 1: When the characters enter the tiny hamlet, they find children playing in the streets. No adults are in sight, chores have been left undone, and the animals are languishing unattended. The characters can determine what is going on only by talking to the children, who are difficult to deal with. The youngsters are happy without their parents telling them what to do and have concocted a series of lies to confound the adventurers.

Event 2: When the characters get too close to discovering the truth, a group of boggles attacks them.

Event 3: After dispatching the boggles and learning everything they need to know, the adventurers must craft a final verse to the poem and help the children recite it.

Event 4: After the children recite the final verse, the parents awaken and begin questioning the characters about what has transpired in Thistledown. A short while later, Felsa's scion reveals her true form and attacks, with a band of boggles to aid her.

Roleplaying

The encounters with the children are designed as roleplaying challenges. Play the nonplayer characters (NPCs) as described, and make the characters work to gain information from them.

If the players fall back on skill checks for their characters, give the children a +5 circumstance bonus to their checks. They're very convincing, and the characters should want to believe them. When the characters become certain that the children are lying, remove this bonus.

Event 1: Parents Sleep and Children Lie

Exploration and Roleplaying Encounter

The adventurers come upon a hamlet where children do as they please, and their parents are nowhere in sight.

When the characters enter the hamlet, read:
Small, simple wooden buildings line both sides of the road. Suddenly, a child bolts from between two of the buildings, runs across the street, and disappears behind another building. The sounds of giggling and laughter float through the air.

Nature DC 14: *This hamlet contains far more magpies than should be in one place.*

The hamlet of Thistledown is tiny, consisting of four houses plus a few ancillary buildings. All are simple, one-story, wooden structures with thatched roofs and small, narrow windows. Behind one of the homes lies

a wheat field, and behind another, a vegetable garden and a small herb garden.

A small, fenced area contains a dozen or so sheep. Near the sheep pen stands a shed that houses a weaver's shop. Near one of the homes stands a small carpentry shop, and between two others is a stable that provides shelter for an ox.

Fill out contents of the houses as you see fit, based on the descriptions of the citizens.

Exploring the Hamlet

The children avoid contact with the characters at first, darting among the buildings and hiding as best they can. A cornered child avoids direct discussion and tries to run away. If a character nabs one of the kids, refer to "Children's Games" for a list of children, and randomly determine which one has been caught.

Even before speaking with the children, the adventurers can investigate the hamlet to begin piecing together an explanation for what's going on.

Homes

If the characters knock on the door of a house, no one answers. Characters who enter a home and investigate discover two adults (or one male, in the house with the herb garden) asleep in bed, seemingly in the throes of bad dreams. The adults cannot be awakened.

A character who examines a sleeping adult in depth discovers a small scab somewhere on the person's exposed skin (neck, face, or hand). A successful DC 16 Heal check reveals that the wound came from a bird's peck.

A successful DC 20 Arcana check to detect magic reveals the presence of a strong magical curse that is keeping the parents asleep.

Gardens

A cursory examination reveals that the wheat field and gardens haven't been tended in a while, and

weeds are starting to take hold. At the edge of the herb garden lies a new grave with a simple wooden plank set at the head. Carved into the wood is the name "Elisea." This spot is the grave of Arianne's mother (see "Arianne").

Livestock

In a pen near one of the houses are a dozen sheep that haven't been tended in some time. The food and water troughs are empty, and the sheep are underfed and lethargic.

In the stable lies a sleeping ox, which is similarly malnourished and dehydrated.

Storage bins in the stable hold food for all the animals, and a hand pump nearby readily provides water.

Magpies

The magpies speak Common and Elven. Use the following statistics for each bird: 1 hp, speed 1 (fly 8), defenses 10, Str 2, Con 8, Dex 12, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 13. The magpies have no attacks.

If the characters approach a magpie, the bird flies off to a new perch. A successful DC 14 Perception check reveals that all the magpies are singing a lilting song in Common. Characters who listen closely can make out the following words.

Children run and children play.
We will keep the bad away.
Guard the children, bright and strong.
Felsa will reward our song.

If the characters capture a magpie, it reveals nothing about the poem or Felsa. If the characters convince it that the children are in danger, it simply tells them that the children know what has happened here.

Children's Games

Although the children are in league with Felsa's scion, no magic is affecting them. They are enjoying their freedom, so they do all they can to avoid direct confrontation with any adults. After it becomes clear that the newcomers aren't leaving, the youngsters make a game out of toying with the characters. Furthermore, the children have concocted a series of lies that they can tell to keep the characters from discovering the truth.

The children are described below, in order from oldest to youngest. The "Lie" section of each entry describes the specific lie that child has concocted. The "Caught" entry describes ways in which the characters might catch the child in his or her lie.

The children have thought hard about their lies and freely expand upon them if questioned in depth. That said, their stories are still the lies of children, and lack the depth and sophistication of an adult's deception. With a bit of investigation and roleplaying, the characters should have little difficulty discovering that these claims are false.

The older children (Eam, Ettain, and Arianne) are savvy enough to reinforce the lies of other children with their own embellishments. They also have their own lies to tell, which they fall back upon if questioned about what they think might have happened.

The younger children (Lillin, Jannek, and Orem) stick to their own lies and don't augment the lies of others.

Each child has the following statistics: 1 hp, speed 5, defenses 10, Str 6, Con 10, Dex 13, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 12, no skills or attacks.

To move on to event 2, the characters must discover the following information.

- The children recited a magical poem that summoned the magpies and put their parents to sleep.
- To end the curse, the characters must create a final verse in the style of the previous verses, and the children must recite it.

Ettain

Ettain is an eleven-year-old girl and Eam's fraternal twin sister. Her father is a forester, and her mother is a carpenter.

Ettain takes full advantage of the fact that she is a few minutes older than her twin brother, frequently bossing him around and claiming that she should be in charge. She is confident and a bit vain.

Lie: Ettain tells the characters that her wooden toys (made by her mother) have started disappearing and reappearing in other parts of the hamlet. (This claim is true; see "Eam," below.) She claims that the toys have "wood spirits" in them (a white lie her mother told her) and that these creatures are somehow responsible for her parents falling asleep.

Caught: The characters might discover Eam hiding some toys. A successful DC 10 Arcana check to detect magic on any toy found reveals that it is not magical at all. A character who has access to the primal power source can discern that the toys have no spirits in them with a successful DC 10 Nature check. A character who has access to the divine power source can do the same with a successful DC 10 Religion check.

Eam

Eam is an eleven-year-old boy and Ettain's fraternal twin brother.

Eam enjoys playing tricks on his sister Ettain, and his favorite trick is stealing and hiding her toys around the hamlet. He keeps quiet around his sister, but is friendly and converses openly when not in her presence.

Lie: Eam claims that his twin sister discovered a strange scroll a couple of weeks ago and read it aloud. The magical words on the scroll caused everyone over fifteen years of age to fall asleep. If pressed for more information, he claims that his sister is a wizard.

Caught: If the characters question Ettain appropriately, they quickly discover that she is just a little

girl and not a wizard at all. In fact, she knows very little about magic, other than her mother's stories about "wood spirits."

Arianne

Arianne is a ten-year-old girl who is still mourning the death of her mother (an herbalist) six months ago. Her father, a vegetable farmer, is asleep in the house that has a vegetable and herb garden behind it.

A little sad, Arianne speaks in short sentences and becomes emotional quickly.

Lie: Arianne tries to get the characters to find her mother, whom she claims is hiding somewhere nearby after accidentally putting the adults to sleep with her "plant magic." She shows the characters her mother's herbalist supplies as proof.

Caught: Younger children, not knowing about Arianne's lie, might reveal that her mother died a few months ago. The characters can easily discover her mother's grave at the edge of the herb garden.

Lillin

Though Lillin appears to be a nine-year-old girl, she is actually Felsa's scion and an integral part of the Slumbering Queen's plan. The scion is friendly but devious.

Lie: Lillin claims that her parents are trappers. The family was traveling through the area, and her parents decided to stop in Thistledown for a while, because the local woods had plenty of animals. If the characters ask where her parents are, she tells them she doesn't know—they were on a trapping expedition in the nearby woods when the adults fell asleep.

Caught: Jannek or Orem might reveal that they have never met Lillin's parents. Knowing that the other parents fell asleep in their beds, the characters might question Lillin about why her parents were in the forest at night, leaving their child all alone. If they pursue this line of questioning (or if Lillin otherwise feels threatened) she uses *Feywild escape* to disappear into the Feywild. She doesn't appear again until event 4.

If the characters don't get around to questioning Lillin before they discover what they must do to end the curse, she is likewise in the Feywild when event 4 begins, and emerges then.

Jannek

Jannek is an eight-year-old boy who wants to be a soldier when he grows up. His parents are the hamlet's wheat farmers.

This boy is very excitable and a little violent because he has taken on the role of the hamlet's guardian in his parents' absence. He's hard to question because he switches subjects quickly and regularly.

Lie: Jannek has carved a wooden goblin foot and used it to press goblin tracks into the ground around the hamlet as part of his "goblin war" game. He claims that goblins must have come in the night and put the adults to sleep. He shows the characters the tracks he "discovered" to convince them.

Caught: A successful DC 14 Perception check reveals that the goblin tracks are identical (not made by a left and a right foot) and unevenly spaced. This observation should tip off the characters that they are fake. A successful DC 14 Nature check reveals that no other signs of goblin activity exist in the area. The characters might also discover Jannek's wooden goblin foot if they search him.

Orem

Orem is a quiet, shy six-year-old boy. His parents tend the sheep in the hamlet and weave the wool into clothing for the other folk.

Orem secretly misses his parents a great deal. He goes along with the other children because he's afraid they will ostracize him if he reveals any information.

Lie: Orem claims that the sheep put his parents to sleep as punishment for cutting off their wool. He points out the idea of "counting sheep to fall asleep" as proof that sheep cause sleep.

Caught: A successful DC 14 Insight check reveals that Orem seems sad and uncertain when he talks about his parents.

A successful DC 10 Nature check (or DC 10 Arcana check to detect magic) reveals that the sheep are not magical at all.

If the characters catch Orem in his lie and question him, he tells them about the magical poem and recites it if asked. He also tells the characters that the only way to wake up their parents is for the children to recite a final verse to the poem. All the children know this remedy (see "Discovering the Truth"), but Orem is the only one willing to volunteer it.

Discovering the Truth

Orem represents the best chance the characters have to discover what has happened in Thistledown. They can also find out by pressuring any one of the other children (except Lillin) into revealing the information after catching him or her in a lie.

To gain the children's cooperation, the characters might point out that they are running out of food, that the animals are sick, or that other threats might be lurking in the woods. If the heroes point out any of these facts (or other immediate dangers), the children become afraid and reveal the following information.

- They dreamed of an old, sleeping woman who taught them the first verse of a poem.
- After they recited this verse together, Lillin came to the hamlet and taught them more verses, which they also recited. Some magpies pecked their parents while they slept and made it so they wouldn't wake up.
- Lillin told them that they must never make up another verse to the poem. If they do, their parents will be very angry with them. Since parents have

to be awake to be angry, the children think any new verse will wake up their parents.

Event 2: Boggles Make the Characters Die

Combat Encounter Level 4 (850 XP)

A group of boggles attempts to kill the characters so that Felsa's slumber curse can continue.

Monsters: 1 boggle body snatcher, 2 boggle sight stealers, 2 boggle chase tricksters. See the end of the adventure for monster stat blocks.

Unknown to the children, several boggles are watching them from the Feywild. Felsa has gifted these creatures with special senses that allow them to see and hear everything that's happening in the hamlet while remaining safe in the fey realm.

When the characters are close to finding out the truth, the boggles emerge from the Feywild and attack. Determine where the characters are on the hamlet map at the time, and place the boggles all around them.

If the adventurers capture one of the boggles and question it, the creature discloses that it is working for the Slumbering Queen. If threatened with death, it reveals that the characters must create a final verse to Felsa's poem to end her magic in the hamlet. It can't reveal anything about the verse, though, because it doesn't know the poem.

Treasure: Each boggle carries a satchel containing food, wine, and a variety of trinkets, coins, gems, and small art objects worth a total of 450 gp. All the items are of Feywild origin.

Development: Any children who witness the boggle attack become fearful. The characters can use the escalating danger to influence the children to reveal more of what they know.

Event 3: Children Chant a Final Verse

Exploration and Roleplaying Encounter

At this point, the characters should have learned the words to the verses the children recited a week or so ago. The heroes must now create a final verse to the poem, and the children must recite this verse to awaken their parents. The final verse must use the same rhyme scheme as the other verses and must describe how the curse ends.

Give the players time to work out a final verse. If they have questions, the older children can offer advice to the characters as you see fit.

After the children recite the final verse, read:

As the children finish their recitation, the magpies screech and gather in one large group atop one of the buildings. From within the houses, multiple adult voices call out various questions.

"What has happened?"

"Eam, Ettain, where are you?"

"My little Orem, come here!"

Recitation of the final verse awakens the sleeping parents and restores them to full health. They emerge from their homes, find their children, and embrace them.

After a few moments, they look to the characters and begin asking questions about what happened. Go to event 4.

Event 4: Ending Felsa's Slumber Curse

Combat Encounter Level 6 (1,375 XP)

Felsa's scion returns with boggle henchmen to punish the characters for foiling her plan.

Monsters: Felsa's scion (S), 2 boggle blink tricksters (B), 3 boggle chase tricksters (C). See the end of the adventure for monster stat blocks.

The awakened parents gather in the center of hamlet to question the characters about what has happened to them. The children are happy to have their parents back, and they apologize for the trouble they've caused.

Allow the players to roleplay a bit and explain the specifics of the trouble in the hamlet.

After the characters have explained, read:

As the parents and children hug, it seems as if life is beginning to return to normal. Suddenly, the magpies take flight and begin squawking as they circle high overhead. A series of popping sounds heralds the appearance of pinpoints of purple light around the hamlet.

The voice of an old woman speaks, seemingly from everywhere at once. "Fools. Felsa shall punish your insolence."

The commoners run for safety, begging for the characters' protection. Felsa's servants aren't interested in the commoners for now, so unless the characters prevent the villagers from taking cover, everyone makes it to safety.

After the commoners are safe, read:

The pinpoints of light grow, each becoming a large patch of glowing purple light. From within these hazy areas, several boggles emerge, along with Lillin.

Lillin smiles wickedly. With a flash of light, her form morphs into that of a young elf girl with stringy green hair and black eyes. Her mouth opens, revealing black teeth, and she speaks. "Kill them all!"

Feywild Bleed Zones: A purple haze fills several areas on the map. These zones are where the Feywild has bled over into the normal world.

The edges of the bleed zones are difficult to penetrate; a nonfey creature must spend 1 additional square of movement to step into or out of a Feywild bleed zone. Physical attacks from nonfey creatures cannot pass a zone's boundary. If a nonfey creature attempts to attack an enemy on the other side of a bleed zone threshold, an invisible force repels the weapon. Furthermore, nonfey creatures do not have line of effect across the zones' edges. Finally, the effects of area and close attacks made by nonfey creatures spread out as normal but don't cross the edges of these zones.

If the scion dies, her body disappears. The Feywild bleed zones dissipate 2 rounds after that.

Treasure: The scion leaves behind a *+1 dagger of speed* (*Mordenkainen's Magnificent Emporium*™, page 35). Each boggle carries a satchel containing food, wine, and a variety of trinkets, coins, gems, and small art objects worth a total of 450 gp. All the items are of Feywild origin.

Conclusion

With the enemies vanquished, the parents invite the heroes to stay in Thistledown for as long as they wish. The citizens have little else to offer in the way of reward. They prepare a simple feast of venison, vegetables, and bread, and toast the characters' victory over the Slumbering Queen.

The characters have earned the ire of the Slumbering Queen. From this point forward, Felsa visits them in their dreams to tell them of the day when she will awaken and rain death upon them and theirs.

About the Author

Craig Campbell is an architect by day and a D&D player, DM, and freelancer by night. In addition, he is one of the hosts of NerdBurger, a weekly podcast in which nerds discuss all kinds of nerdy things. Check it out at http://www.nerdburger-show.com.

Boggle Body Snatcher **Level 5 Controller**
Small fey humanoid XP 200

HP 61; **Bloodied** 30 **Initiative** +7
AC 19, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 15 **Perception** +9
Speed 6, climb 6 Darkvision
Resist 5 fire

Traits

Dimensional Window
The boggle can make Thievery checks against any creature within 10 squares of it that it is aware of.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Claw** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage.

Body Snatch (charm) ✦ **Recharge** ⚅ ⚄ ⚃
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +8 vs. Will
Hit: The target is dominated (save ends). Until the target saves against this effect, the boggle is removed from play, and the target gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls. When the effect ends, the boggle returns to play in an unoccupied space of its choice within 5 squares of the target.

Move Actions

Dimension Hop (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The boggle teleports up to 3 squares.

Minor Actions

Boggle Sweat Stain ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Effect: The boggle's current square is greased until the end of the encounter. Whenever any creature other than a boggle willingly enters the greased square, that creature falls prone.

Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +12, Thievery +12
Str 15 (+4) **Dex** 20 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+4)
Con 13 (+3) **Int** 5 (-1) **Cha** 6 (+0)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Goblin

Boggle Sight Stealer **Level 3 Lurker**
Small fey humanoid XP 150

HP 37; **Bloodied** 18 **Initiative** +10
AC 17, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 13 **Perception** +8
Speed 6, climb 6 Darkvision
Resist 5 fire

Traits

Dimensional Window
The boggle can make Thievery checks against any creature within 10 squares of it that it is aware of.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Claw** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage.

Neck Bite ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature grabbed by the boggle); +6 vs. Reflex
Hit: 4d6 + 8 damage.
Miss: Half damage.

Peek-a-Boo Trick (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The boggle must have no creature grabbed.
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex
Hit: The boggle teleports the target to an unoccupied square within 2 squares of the boggle, and the target is grabbed (escape DC 13). The target is blinded until the grab ends. The boggle must remain within 2 squares of the target for the grab to persist.

Move Actions

Dimension Hop (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The boggle teleports up to 3 squares.

Triggered Actions

Face Rip (teleportation) ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: A creature grabbed by the boggle escapes the grab.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): Melee 2 (triggering creature). The target takes 1d8 + 5 damage, and the boggle teleports up to 3 squares.

Skills Athletics +8, Stealth +11, Thievery +11
Str 15 (+3) **Dex** 20 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 13 (+2) **Int** 5 (-2) **Cha** 6 (-1)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Goblin

Boggle Chase Trickster (C) **Level 4 Skirmisher**
Small fey humanoid XP 175

HP 53; **Bloodied** 26 **Initiative** +9
AC 18, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 14 **Perception** +9
Speed 6, climb 6 Darkvision
Resist 5 fire

Traits

Dimensional Window
The boggle can make Thievery checks against any creature within 10 squares of it that it is aware of.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Claw** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage.

Move Actions

Dimension Hop (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The boggle teleports up to 3 squares.

Minor Actions

Foot-Snare Trick ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Effect: Melee 1 (one creature flanked by the boggle). If the target moves more than 3 squares during its next turn, it falls prone at the end of that turn.

Triggered Actions

Chase Trick (charm) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
Trigger: A creature misses the boggle with a melee attack.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The boggle shifts up to 3 squares and then pulls the triggering creature to a square adjacent to it. The triggering creature's movement provokes opportunity attacks. If the creature ends this movement without taking damage from an attack, it can make a melee basic attack against the boggle as a free action.

Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +12, Thievery +12
Str 15 (+4) **Dex** 20 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+4)
Con 13 (+3) **Int** 5 (-1) **Cha** 6 (+0)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Goblin

Boggle Blink Trickster (B) **Level 4 Artillery**
Small fey humanoid XP 175

HP 43; **Bloodied** 21 **Initiative** +7
AC 18, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 14 **Perception** +9
Speed 6, climb 6 Darkvision
Resist 5 fire

Traits

Dimensional Window
The boggle can make Thievery checks against any creature within 10 squares of it that it is aware of.

Standard Actions

⨺ **Dimension Claw** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 10 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage.

⨺ **Double Diversion Trick** ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
Effect: The boggle uses *dimension claw* twice.

Move Actions

Dimension Hop (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The boggle teleports up to 3 squares.

Triggered Actions

Teleport Trick (teleportation) ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: The boggle takes damage from a melee attack.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The boggle teleports up to 3 squares.

Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +12, Thievery +12
Str 15 (+4) **Dex** 20 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+4)
Con 13 (+3) **Int** 5 (-1) **Cha** 6 (+0)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Goblin

Felsa's Scion (S) **Level 6 Elite Controller**
Small fey humanoid XP 500

HP 140; **Bloodied** 70 **Initiative** +6
AC 20, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 19 **Perception** +10
Speed 6 Low-light vision
Immune charm
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits

☼ **Dream Drain** ✦ **Aura** 3
Any enemy starting its turn unconscious in the aura loses a healing surge. If the enemy has no healing surge to lose, it instead loses a number of hit points equal to its healing surge value.

Standard Actions

⨺/⨻ **Dagger** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 or ranged 10 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d4 + 6 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the scion's next turn.

⨻ **Eye of Dreams** (psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +9 vs. Will
Hit: 2d6 + 7 psychic damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of the scion's next turn.

Double Attack ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The scion makes two basic attacks.

✲ **Felsa's Slumber** (charm, sleep) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Attack: Area burst 2 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +9 vs. Will
Effect: The target is dazed and immobilized (save ends both). If the target is already dazed or immobilized, it falls unconscious instead.
First Failed Saving Throw: The target falls unconscious (save ends).

Minor Actions

Deceptive Veil (illusion) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The scion can disguise itself to appear as any Small humanoid, usually a child, until it uses *deceptive veil* again or drops to 0 hit points. A creature that succeeds on a DC 28 Insight check can see through the illusion.

Feywild Escape (teleportation) ✦ **Encounter**
Effect: The scion crosses over to the Feywild and is removed from play until the start of its next turn. At that time, the scion returns to play within 10 squares of its previous location and becomes invisible until the end of its current turn.

Skills Arcana +8, Bluff +12, Insight +10
Str 10 (+3) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 15 (+5)
Con 14 (+5) **Int** 11 (+3) **Cha** 19 (+7)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven

The Art of Deception

A D&D® adventure for characters of levels 11-13

By Alexander Winter

Illustrations by Ralph Horsley, Phill Simmer, and Chris Seaman

Cartography by Jason A. Engle

Masters of illusion and deception, rakshasas have a ruthless streak and an insatiable lust for power, luxury, and vice. They use their abilities to slay the powerful and rich, then step into their victims' comfortable lives and impersonate them. The lust and other vices to which rakshasas are prone push them to ever-greater risks and extremes of behavior, practically ensuring their eventual discovery and execution. Death is only an inconvenience to them, however, since rakshasas reincarnate with the accumulated experience, skills, and knowledge of their dozens—sometimes hundreds—of lives.

In "The Art of Deception," three ambitious rakshasas (Uzuz, Abduq, and Mag'hura by name) have put aside their suspicions of one another and joined forces to overthrow the Barony of Ealding. Through various infernal contacts, the rakshasas learned about a tiefling merchant named Gustaf Prust, who had traded his soul for the power to fashion magic rings that he could sell to wealthy buyers. The rakshasas confronted Prust and offered to spare his life if he

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was to make three magic prison-rings—one for each rakshasa—that would not only trap a creature within, but also imprint the prisoner's personality on the ring. Such a device would eliminate the need for the rakshasas to painstakingly study their prey and learn to imitate their mannerisms. Eager to save his skin and put off his eternal torment in the Nine Hells for a bit longer, Prust accepted the offer.

Gustaf realized that he would have to craft each ring for a specific victim. So he introduced the rakshasas to potential targets through his mercantile and social connections in Ealding and let them choose. The rakshasas selected as victims the baron, the master of the thieves' guild, and the chief magistrate. After the rakshasas had kidnapped their prey, Prust bound the three men into rings—one gold, one silver, and one bronze. Whoever wore one of these rings could read the mind of the victim trapped inside. The rakshasas were pleased. They recognized the value of Prust's resourcefulness, magical skill, and connections, so they retained him as their broker.

The rakshasas stepped into their new roles six months ago. They are already beginning to jockey for dominance using the authority of their positions.

It was the canny Abduq who persuaded Uzuz to raise taxes in Ealding. Abduq explained that the taxes could bankroll the expensive luxuries and parties of which Uzuz is so fond, but because the chief magistrate is in charge of tax collection, Abduq also benefits. Developing a smuggling business was Mag'hura's method of capitalizing on the situation, but Uzuz took a dim view of Mag'hura making a profit at his expense, so he ordered the town watch to crack down on crime.

Uzuz, posing as the baron, has become careless about maintaining his victim's persona, however. The baron's wife, Elena D'Tabart, suspecting that the person who seems to be the baron is not her husband, sought out the chief magistrate for help—unaware that he is also an impostor. In the guise of the chief magistrate, Abduq allayed her fears and persuaded her to return home. Then he asked his accomplice, Mag'hura (posing as leader of the thieves' guild) to dispose of the woman. Before guild assassins can kill her, Elena contacts the player characters for help.

Synopsis

The characters receive a desperate letter from Baroness Elena D'Tabart of Ealding, begging for their help. When they arrive in Ealding, the baroness's poor health delays their meeting. This interlude offers the adventurers a perfect opportunity to learn about the baron, the town, and the three major issues of concern to the citizens: taxes, smuggling, and the recent crackdown on crime (all consequences of the rakshasas' rivalry). The characters meet the baron (Uzuz) before their appointment with Elena, and he tells them that the unfortunate woman is sick in the mind. At the meeting, Elena claims the baron is an impostor, but assassins strike before she can explain her allegation in detail. The assassins either kidnap or kill Elena unless the heroes prevent them from doing so.

From here, the adventure becomes an open-ended investigation. The assassins leave clues that the characters can pursue along different paths, all of which lead to the same point: Gustaf Prust, the rakshasas' pawn and intermediary. During the investigation, the chief magistrate (Abduq) offers the heroes assistance so that he can spy upon them more easily. If the characters approach Prust for answers, he offers them a deal: In exchange for his freedom, he will betray his fiendish bosses.

Because each rakshasa harbors a secret fear of betrayal by the other two, they have decided to protect themselves by establishing a pact of mutually assured destruction. Each has kept correspondence from the other two that would reveal everyone's guilt if it fell into the wrong hands.

The characters can stage a smash-and-grab raid to obtain that evidence, or they could retrieve a single incriminating letter from a courier. With that evidence in their hands, the heroes have many options: expose the rakshasas to the town (and thereby make the townsfolk targets for the rakshasas' revenge), use the evidence to force a confrontation, or use it as leverage in negotiations with the rakshasas to achieve some other conclusion.

Running the Adventure

"The Art of Deception" is intended for four to six characters of levels 11 to 13. Familiarize yourself with the Monster Vault™ depiction of rakshasas, then read the descriptions of important nonplayer characters (NPCs) to understand the motives of each. You should also make a note of each player character's passive Perception and Insight modifiers and keep these values handy during play.

The heroes must proceed carefully, gathering evidence and keeping a low profile, if they hope to expose the rakshasas and their plot. Simply barging in to fight the villains is a quick path to defeat in this situation, since the villains have assumed the identities of powerful city leaders. If the false baron or chief magistrate finds proof that the characters are conspiring against the "authorities," the two can work together to order arrests, stage a trial, and pass judgments of imprisonment, exile, or execution. The rakshasas are, to anyone who matters, members of the nobility. The only proof they need is a handful of witnesses who overheard the characters plotting. The guildmaster can pay such witnesses to testify against the characters, or they can pay assassins to kill them.

The rakshasas can kill witnesses and destroy evidence more easily than they can confront the player characters. If the heroes attack a rakshasa, it flees to safety while its guards deal with the threat. Once out of sight, the rakshasa can change its appearance and

safely slip away. If flight is not possible, the rakshasa attacks only when conditions are favorable.

For example, if Uzuz needs to escape, he can change from the baron into a chambermaid, walk 30 feet, and still have an action remaining to create another illusion—possibly of a rumpled carpet indicating that someone ran in the opposite direction. Once outside, he can become a guard at her post, a one-armed beggar, or a workman on his way home.

Loyal guards, who have no reason to be suspicious of their bosses, surround the villains. With the possible exception of the thieves' guild members, the rakshasas' guards are the very townspeople the characters mean to help. Entirely unaware of the rakshasas' presence, such guards readily defend their employers. Some of these guards are loyal knights or elite mercenaries, but most are simple town guards who fall quickly if the characters attack. Other citizens react to characters slaying town guards the way any sensible person would react to well-armed people slaying constables.

No matter how persuasive the characters are, they can't persuade loyal followers to turn on their leaders without solid evidence. Without proof, NPCs simply conclude that the characters are lunatics, troublemakers, or even assassins. Those explanations seem much more plausible than the crazy notion that the town leaders have been replaced by immortal fiends.

Although the adventure contains a few structured encounters, you might need to improvise encounters in response to PC actions. Therefore, monster statistics and recommendations appear in an appendix at the end of the adventure.

Ealding

The adventure occurs in the town of Ealding (population 9,827). This community sits at the heart of a small barony of the same name. Its population is predominantly human, with some dwarves and a smattering of other races. The town lies in the foothills of a mountain range at the edge of the wilderness. The economy thrives on copper mining and a nearby marble quarry, and the local artisans use both of these materials to produce exceptionally beautiful works of art.

The marble sculptures and bronze statuary attract heavy purses, so the town is prosperous. Ealding is home to half a dozen art studios, as many taverns, an alchemist's shop, three temples, and four smithies, in addition to dozens of stores selling the sundries and services essential to civilized life. Characters can find common magic items appropriate for their experience for sale easily enough.

Government

The executive head of the local government is Baron Aymon D'Tabart, whose family has ruled for more than a century. An elected council of four magistrates, with Chief Magistrate Hugh Milfort at its head, handles daily affairs of state. The town watch consists of roughly 160 soldiers, with squires as sergeants, who protect the walls and keep the roads safe. In addition, twenty-four knights oppose incursions of monsters from the nearby mountains.

Hard labor in the copper mines or marble quarries is the punishment for most crimes. Sentences range from a few days to many years. Only the most serious and violent offenses are punished with death.

Despite the harsh penalties, a small thieves' guild called the Back-Alley Bashers has been active in Ealding for many years. Its couple of dozen members tightened security when the town watch began its crackdown, and the guild remains on high alert. Since Mag'hura took over, the guild has maintained a discreet market for illegal goods, with import/export services for tax dodgers (mainly exported art and imported alcohol). The black market sells poisons, exotic animals, thieves' tools, and level-appropriate magic items (both common and uncommon). The prices for all uncommon items include a 10 percent surcharge because of black-market inflation.

Cast of Characters

This section details the citizens of Ealding whom the characters are likely to question, confront, or otherwise interact with. Use these descriptions to aid in roleplaying during the investigation. Other NPCs appear in specific events, but those presented here are likely to appear in multiple scenes while the characters investigate the mystery.

The Villains

These five NPCs are the villains of the story—the three rakshasas and their henchmen.

Baron Aymon D'Tabart (Uzuz)

Uzuz, the rakshasa impersonating Baron Aymon D'Tabart, is the most reckless of the three. His particular passions include debauchery, fine wine, and art—particularly statuary. Uzuz loves attention and grand parties. When not posing for a portrait in full plate, he is reveling with his nobles in fanciful and bright clothes. All these behaviors are quite unlike those of the real Aymon.

Uzuz is bolder and less clever than his fellow fiends. He chafes at Abduq's authority and takes risks to act as the baron's station allows. If he suspects the characters have proof of his true nature or plan to attack him, he might accompany the guards sent to arrest them, so that he can personally inform the heroes of their fate. If the characters resist, Uzuz declares them enemies of Ealding. He follows the same procedure for witnesses or people in possession of evidence.

A coterie of knights, who tolerate nothing that impugns the honor of their lord, follows Uzuz everywhere. They defend the "baron" to the death.

Uzuz wears a bronze ring on the index finger of his left hand. This ring, which contains the real Baron Aymon D'Tabart, is never visible while Uzuz is disguised as the baron.

Guildmaster Olan Villers (Mag'hura)

Mag'hura is the rakshasa impersonating Olan "Split Sides" Villers, the leader of the local thieves' guild known as the Back-Alley Bashers. Unlike Ol' Split-Sides, the rakshasa has no sense of humor, but she uses her ring to summon up the jokes for which Olan is infamous. As the least-seen member of the triad, Mag'hura is the ideal choice to serve as liaison between the rakshasas and Gustaf Prust, so she visits him regularly in other guises.

The greediest of the three rakshasas, Mag'hura is nevertheless more circumspect than Uzuz. In particular, she resents Uzuz using the town watch to persecute the Bashers and disrupt her cash flow. But her miserliness is proving to be a liability in many ways. She never discards resources—even dangerous ones such as adversaries—if she thinks they might prove useful in the future. Mag'hura is also lazy, and she delegates to Prust any task that she considers menial, such as the details of Elena's assassination.

Of the three rakshasas, Mag'hura is the most likely to send assassins against the characters, although she won't do so in a way that risks too much. She might poison one character as a message to the others to leave town.

Mag'hura rarely leaves the Goblin's Goblet, where the Bashers have their headquarters, and never does so as Olan. If she does go out (usually to visit Prust), she assumes the guise of an anonymous commoner. In the Goblin, her companions always guard her.

Mag'hura wears a silver ring on the thumb of her right hand. The ring, which contains the real Olan, is never visible while Mag'hura is disguised as the Villers.

Chief Magistrate Hugh Milfort (Abduq)

The oldest rakshasa masquerades as Hugh Milfort, Ealding's chief magistrate. He loves gold and pleasure, but not as much as his peers do. Instead, he craves power.

Abduq is careful, patient, and willing to sacrifice major pawns to achieve his goals. He understands that power needs maintenance, and he believes that the best tools to retain power are charm and misdirection. He does not underestimate mortals, but he does have a compulsion to gloat, which is his greatest weakness. Even in defeat, Abduq is likely to gloat that victory is still his, since he is immortal and can pursue revenge when the characters are old and he is again young.

If Abduq suspects that the characters are putting the pieces of the current puzzle together, he is likely to murder a witness—even a useful one such as Gustaf Prust—and frame the characters for it. Since he is the chief magistrate, he can preside over their trial as judge.

Abduq wears a gold ring on the middle finger of his backward left hand. The ring, which contains the real Hugh Milfort, is never visible while Abduq is disguised as the chief magistrate.

Gustaf Prust

Gustaf is the unhappy lackey of the rakshasas. Although they compensate him well for his work and his discretion, he is a high-risk asset and he knows it. Gustaf connects the three rakshasas and knows their true identities. His devil's bargain and mercantile connections have kept him alive so far, but Prust knows that protection won't last if the rakshasas find someone unaware of their identities who can replace him, or if the risk of keeping him alive becomes too high.

Prust is a frighteningly thin tiefling with sunken, shifty eyes. His only chance for long-term survival is to kill the rakshasas. He plans to fake his own death and set a group of adventurers on the rakshasas to seal his freedom. When the characters approach Prust with evidence of his involvement in Elena's attack, he realizes that implementation of his plan must be now or never.

Towser

It was Prust who suggested that the friendly, simple-minded Towser carry the rakshasas's messages. Towser could not suspect anything, and he already wandered around town performing odd jobs, so no one would notice or care where he went. This arrangement also meant that Prust would know the rakshasas's courier and could intercept their messages, but lazy Mag'hura didn't consider that fact when she agreed to use him.

Helpful NPCs

The following NPCs may provide useful information, or even ally with the heroes.

Baroness Elena D'Tabart

Sometimes called the Mad Madame by unsympathetic commoners, Baroness D'Tabart lost most of her children, her beauty, and her faculties to a plague three years ago. She still remembers her loving husband, though, and knows Uzuz is not him.

Elena loves stories of brave heroes, so she seeks out the characters for help to save her husband. She is very fragile since her illness, and characters who offer healing rituals such as Cure Disease realize in short order that she is unlikely to survive the system shock. If she survives the assassination in event 3, she may yet die unless the characters take personal action to escort her someplace safe.

Tancred Ironjaw

Tancred is the last survivor of the Ironclad Company, the adventuring group that slew previous incarnations of the rakshasas ten years ago. It was unfortunate for Tancred that he decided to surprise his old friend Aymon with a visit shortly after the rakshasas arrived. Uzuz recognized the venerable old fighter, and now he rots in the keep's dungeon.

The real Aymon never allowed prisoners to be housed in the dungeon, and he had it closed off with a stone door long ago. Only the rakshasas know that Tancred is a prisoner in the keep, though a few people in town know that the old hero disappeared unexpectedly after his last visit.

Magistrate Brewce DeCorbin

Middle-aged and honorable to a fault, DeCorbin is a deputy magistrate who might be the characters' best ally in Ealding. If they are honest and open with him about the reason for their investigation (Lady Elena summoned them over concerns about changes in the baron), then DeCorbin agrees to help them. He, too, has become aware of a change in the baron's personality and is concerned about it.

DeCorbin has no other agenda. He tolerates a certain amount of extralegal shenanigans because he understands that heroes sometimes operate best outside the rules. He will take no action against the city leaders without proof, though, and even with proof, his honor demands that noble persons have the chance to explain themselves before he slaps them in irons. DeCorbin recognizes Tancred if he sees him and can point characters in the direction of Allard if necessary.

Magistrate Ondomar Hathala

A rude half-elf deputy magistrate, Ondomar is unwilling to waste time with the character's stories of the Mad Madame's ravings, or to explain current affairs to them. In his opinion, the characters are unruly vigilantes who've forgotten their place, and he's likely to say as much to them. If the characters have proof of illegal activity—especially if it involves his boss, Milfort—that's an entirely different situation. Ondomar demands equal credit for discovering the plot and helping to resolve it. He accepts whatever plans the characters offer as long as he gets his share of the reward.

Magistrate Quinn Primble

Quinn is the newest deputy magistrate, appointed to the job after thieves killed his predecessor, Gyles. (Gyles made Abduq feel foolish in tribunal, and Abduq doesn't like to feel foolish.) Quinn has seen through Abduq's disguise in brief flashes. Since he has no idea of what's really happening, he believes he's going insane. Quinn blames the citywide tension and Gyles's disappearance for his frayed nerves. He speaks little, paranoid that he might betray his insanity and be sent to Ania's Convent.

A successful DC 22 Insight check reveals his state. It takes a successful DC 22 Diplomacy check to get him to reveal any information. Even then, he just admits that he's afraid for his person, considering how Gyles vanished, and his fear is affecting his work—a fact that could cost him his job. If the check result is 30 or higher, and the characters seem sympathetic, Quinn might also confess to having hallucinations that Milfort really has the face of a beast.

Quinn is too paranoid to risk prosecuting the chief magistrate or the baron. He suggests that the heroes ask Ondomar or Brewce for assistance with such a plan.

Lady Josselyn D'Tabart

Josselyn is the heir to the D'Tabart holdings. Strong, brave, intelligent, and elegant, she expresses the best traits of both her father and her mother. She idolizes Aymon but thinks Elena is entirely insane. Josselyn loves and pities her mother, but accusations against Aymon, especially if the source is Elena, offend her.

WITNESS PROTECTION

Some of the witnesses might disappear after the characters have interviewed them. If the rakshasas have reason to suspect that any NPC is helping the party too much, or has learned too much truth from the player characters, the rakshasas arrange for that NPC to disappear. In most cases, however, the various NPCs know too little of the real story for the rakshasas to bother with them.

You can devise scenes that require the characters to protect such witnesses. For example, someone might try to burn down a merchant's shop, or Colharan might report shady characters tailing him. The characters then have an opportunity to prevent loss or investigate the aftermath.

The lady believes all the recent trouble arises from her mother's madness and her father's failure to stand up to the thieves' guild. It does bother her that Aymon sees few of his old friends anymore, and instead spends most of his time with the young nobles, who she thinks are poor substitutes. She chalks these new alliances up to an attempt to recapture lost youth in the face of other stresses.

Josselyn also knows Tancred Ironjaw as Uncle Red, a dear friend of her father's. A few months ago, Uncle Red arrived unannounced and left abruptly no more than 6 hours later. He didn't even bother to say goodbye, which is very unusual.

Josselyn can provide information from event 2 if the characters ask her questions before leaving the keep. She might ask to see the heroes about the attack, especially if you need her to give them information. She knows anything from "Current Events," "Baron Aymon," "Baroness Elena," and "Prust" up to

DC 22, and anything about "Milfort" and "Ealding" (except the rakshasas' struggles for dominance) up to DC 25.

Sir Colharan

A tall, regal man of middle years, Sir Colharan has served the barony for most of his life and for the baron's entire rule. His appearance is entirely military, from his close-cropped silver hair and clean-shaven face to his polished armor and weapons. He deeply respects the baron and loves the D'Tabart family. Recently, though, he has become disturbed at the baron's change in behavior. His rationalizes his feelings much the way Josselyn does.

Colharan suspects that someone in the baron's manor is spying for the thieves' guild. If the characters are willing to help him, he continues feeding information and evidence to them.

Use Colharan to help the characters gain what they need to know. For example, if the characters weren't able to search the fallen assassins in event 3, Colharan sends a courier to them with a package containing the items needed to further the investigation.

Event 1: Elena's Letter

Roleplaying Encounter

The adventure begins when a courier riding a hippogriff approaches the characters with a parcel from Baroness Elena D'Tabart. Inside is a letter bearing the wax seal of the D'Tabarts and a 10-inch-tall bronze figurine depicting some memorable or heroic scene that the characters should recognize from their own adventures. The letter appears soiled with inkblots, corrections, and water stains, though whether these marks are from the journey or from tears is impossible to say.

When the characters open the letter, read:

I am the Baroness Elena D'Tabart of Ealding, though I would rather you simply call me Elena. You do not know me, but I am a follower of your exploits. The little bronze statue is my favorite tale from your adventures.

I desperately seek your help. Something is terribly wrong with my husband, and I know not what. Every day his condition worsens, but I can do nothing. Please come to Ealding and help bring my husband back to me.

If you do not consider the forlorn pleas of an admiring and troubled baroness reason enough to come, our town is rich in artists who would fashion statues or jewelry grand enough in scale and skill to serve as a reward for heroes of your stature.

I pray to Pelor and Moradin that you come.
Your most devoted admirer,
Baroness Elena D'Tabart

The courier, an elf named Lona who often carries messages for the D'Tabarts, knows the following information.

- Baroness Elena D'Tabart is a kind woman, but very sick. Some in Ealding call her "the Mad Madame" because of the illness that plagues her mind. (A successful DC 20 Insight check reveals that Lona is holding back information. A follow-up success on a DC 24 Diplomacy check encourages Lona to admit that when she received the parcel, the lady seemed distraught—maybe even hysterical—but not insane.)
- Baron Aymon D'Tabart is a just lord who has recently begun putting the screws to the local thieves' guild.
- Ealding is a burgeoning town full of excellent artists and artisans. It lies along the main road, three days' ride from here.
- The statuette is worth 500 gp. The baroness tasked Lona with delivering the message, receiving an answer, and reporting back in two days.

If the characters agree to undertake the mission, the messenger explains that they are to report to the baroness three days hence. Rooms will be waiting for them at the Pegasus, the finest inn in Ealding. The seal from the letter is proof of their appointment, should anyone ask.

If the characters decline, the messenger asks them to reconsider. If they refuse to come to Ealding, Elena is committed to an asylum a week later. The characters hear no more of Ealding or the rakshasas for some time. A year later, they hear that some other adventurers discovered and drove away the rakshasa imposters after Ealding became a tyrannical hellhole.

Event 2: Arrival in Ealding

Roleplaying Encounter

If the characters travel to Ealding and head directly to the baron's estate, a servant informs them that the baroness is ill but on the road to recovery. Unless they force their way in or offer magical healing, the servant tells them firmly to come back tomorrow, when the Lady Elena can see them.

If they comply with the request to leave, the characters have one full day to explore Ealding and learn about Elena, her husband, and local events. Continue with this event.

If the characters insist on seeing Elena immediately, or if they offer healing services, they can forgo the exploration of Ealding and proceed directly to event 3.

Gathering Information

Characters can gather information by making skill checks (Streetwise or History). Each check represents an hour spent gathering information. A character must first decide what sort of information he or she wishes to learn, then attempt the appropriate check to determine what is learned. Consult the desired information category for the character's line

of questioning. The character gains all the pieces of information in that category with DCs equal to or below the check result. Statements flagged with asterisks (*) are misleading or only partially true. Use them to add depth to the adventure or distract the players, or simply leave them out, at your discretion.

On any check result of 14 or lower, the character gains no information, and his or her questions attract the attention of the rakshasas.

Current Events (Streetwise)

DC 15: The town watch is cracking down on crime. You'd best keep your nose clean or you'll end up in the quarries!

DC 17*: An assassin tried to kill the baron some weeks ago. That attempt on his life was a desperate attempt to end the crackdown, because the thieves' guild is on the verge of collapse. Many of us are happy with the thought of running businesses without fear of extortion and traveling roads without fear of bandits.

DC 18: The baron foiled the attempt on his life by using some sort of magic, and the assassin killed several guards before fleeing. The town watch eventually cornered him, and he died trying to escape. The town watch hasn't made an official statement, but we all believe the assassin was from the thieves' guild. The temples have taken up a collection for the families who lost loved ones.

DC 20*: Some people think orcs are gathering in the mountains again. Miners found crude markings painted on rocks along the goat paths above the quarries.

DC 22: Merchants are unhappy about the recent tax hikes, even though Ealding's trade is steady. One woman in particular—Angva Mournhammer, an artist who works in local marble and bronze—is doing quite well, though she does not flaunt that fact. She's taken on six more apprentices this past year.

DC 25: If you need a man "in the know," Allard Wood is a retired frontiersman (some say bandit) who keeps his ear close to the ground and is sharp as a knife. He might not know the exact information you're looking for, but he undoubtedly knows who does. His help isn't cheap, but he's worth every copper.

DC 26: The peasants need a leader like the baron to inspire them, but it's the magistrates who deserve recognition for throwing the book at the thieves' guild. Three months ago, one of the magistrates—Gyles—disappeared shortly after sentencing a captured reprobate to hard labor in the mines.

DC 27: The crackdown on crime is ineffective. Not only is the black market stronger than ever, but the thieves are also making heaps of gold from smuggling. In addition, they have a first-rate gambling ring serving a range of clients from penny gamblers to high rollers. The guard can't figure out where it is or how the guild is keeping it secret.

DC 28: The chief magistrate, Hugh Milfort, has said he plans to drag the entire thieves' guild through the court system and throw the book at each and every member. Many of us fear for his life.

DC 30: Olan Villers, better known as Ol' Split-Sides, is the master of the thieves' guild. She got her name for being a funny character and for a gruesome tale involving a cow and an ogre. Where Ol' Split-Sides is hiding these days, who can say?

Baron Aymon (Streetwise)

DC 15: The peasants consider the baron a fair and just leader who protects the city and upholds the law. He is devoted to caring for his insane wife, Elena, and his daughter, Josselyn.

DC 18: The baron leaves the marching and plate mail to young folk. His patronage of the arts and attention to his nobles is becoming of a mature leader.

DC 22: Although the baron's interest in art and the finer things of life has been late-blooming, he has taken to them as naturally as he took to riding and battle in his twenties. He demonstrates impeccable and discriminating taste in art, music, wine, and luxuries of all kinds. Perhaps he has a tutor who helps him.

Baroness Elena (Streetwise)

DC 15: Sometimes called the Mad Madame, the baroness contracted a plague three years ago. Though she recovered, the disease left her a few apples short of a bushel.

DC 18: Before the plague, Elena was a fine woman with three lovely children. Two of the children died of the plague. Her sole surviving daughter, Josselyn, is a mixture of her parents' best qualities and quite a promising heir.

DC 22: The baroness spends a great deal of time with her husband's court entertainer, listening to tales of heroes. The baron used to join her, but of late the crackdown on criminal activity has occupied most of his attention.

Magistrate Milfort (Streetwise)

DC 15: Milfort is the chief magistrate. Magistrates in Ealding are not only judges; they also handle all types of civic affairs.

DC 17: Milfort is a modest man and a tireless workhorse. He spends almost all of his waking hours at the courthouse.

DC 22: His wife Merelda and Baroness Elena were great friends. Merelda succumbed to the plague three years ago.

DC 25: The chief magistrate is also the exchequer for the barony. He's been busy dealing with the new customs revenue in recent weeks. Gustaf Prust (Streetwise)

DC 15: Prust is a local wizard turned merchant. He deals primarily in magic items—especially rings for aristocrats. His rings are usually novelty items, although it's said that he once crafted a *ring of feather fall* and used the money from that venture to start his business.

DC 17: The stress of trading and traveling has taken its toll. Prust looks old for a man of 35, with graying hair and a ghastly thin body.

DC 22: He leaves Ealding frequently on business trips and rarely attends to the day-to-day matters of his shop. It common to see him coming or going from the west gate on his horse, but he doesn't speak much.

DC 25: Prust sold his sizable home not long ago for a small fortune. Due to his frequent traveling, he never used it.

Ealding (History)

DC 15: A plague struck the area three years ago. Most of the victims died, but a few survived with terrible side effects. The disease affects the body and mind and is very hard to cure, even with magic.

DC 17: The D'Tabarts received their barony four generations ago and have a fine reputation as defenders of justice. The family provides financial support to the local temples of Erathis, Moradin, and Pelor. The baron's wife and two of his children caught the plague. The children died from it. The baroness recovered, but it left her body weak and her mind addled.

DC 18: A famous artist, Tristan of Ealding, was born here. Every major city in the realm can boast at least one Tristan original. He and others who came here to work have given Ealding a reputation as an "artist's town."

DC 20: The previous Baron, Aymon III, died fighting an orc warband nearly thirty years ago. A young Aymon D'Tabart rallied his remaining soldiers and rode to the front with a handful of knights and a band of adventurers. With this force, he drove the orcs back into the wilderness. This battle established Aymon's reputation as a strong leader and warrior.

DC 22: Aymon's success against the orcs was partly due to an obscure group of adventurers called the Ironclad Company. Their involvement is often overlooked because of Aymon's courageous charge.

DC 25: A priestess named Ania founded a convent near Ealding a hundred years ago, where priests of Ioun could gather to study rare magical illnesses. The convent is a sanctuary for those with unusual ailments or in need of safe shelter. The convent lies three days' travel by horse from Ealding.

DC 30*: Long before marble and copper were discovered nearby, Ealding was a trading post in which humans and mountain dwarves bartered goods. The humans lived in the village above, while the dwarves lived in a series of tunnels below. As the water table rose, the dwarves' living space became smaller and smaller, until they finally abandoned the tunnels. Most of the town's wells lead to the caves, which are now effectively reservoirs. No one's been down there for ages, but rumor holds that a few lost dwarven treasures still lie buried there.

Ironclad Company (History)

Any character looking for information on the Ironclad Company in a temple library receives a +2 circumstance bonus on related checks.

DC 15: The Ironclad Company began adventuring about forty years ago, operating primarily in the wilderness beyond Ealding. The group's heroic adventures—including several missions to aid Baron Aymon in his early years as ruler of Ealding—have been passed down in story and song ever since.

DC 20: The group disbanded five years ago after two members died, leaving a half-elf named Brodarin and a human named Tancred Ironjaw—both warriors. These two surviving members retired, although no one knows exactly where.

DC 25: By the end of their careers, members of the Ironclad Company were adventuring less and acting more like advisors to generals and nobles.

DC 30: From the few records of the group's later exploits, it looks like the Ironclad Company was highly skilled with politically sensitive matters. Its members uncovered and thwarted conspiracies, smuggling and racketeering operations, abductions, and the like.

Event 3: Save the Baroness

Combat Encounter Level 10 (2,800 XP)

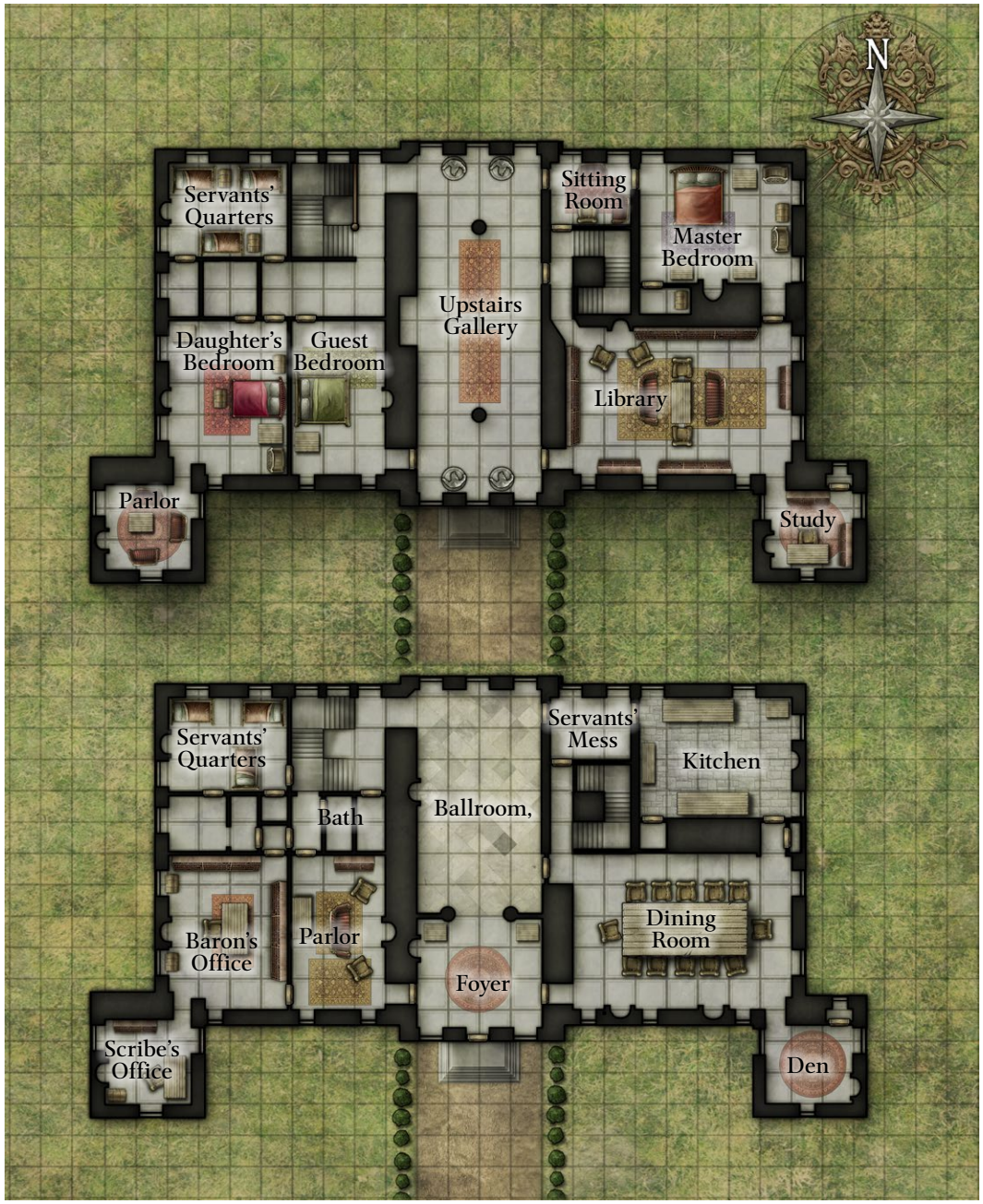
The characters meet the baron and his troubled wife, as well as a squad of assassins and blackguards posing as priests and paladins.

Monsters: 3 shadow assassins, 2 shadow knights
Other Creatures: Baroness Elena D'Tabart

When the characters first enter the keep, read:
The baron's manor is famed for its stony battlements and the beautiful statue garden in the rear courtyard. Under the murder holes of the barbican, a fit man in plate mail sits astride a horse, apparently posing stoically for a portrait. Though the man appears to be in his early fifties, he seems quite robust. Upon noticing the approach of visitors, he nods to the artist, dismounts, and approaches with a warm smile.

"You must be the adventurers Elena spoke about. You are most welcome in our home, and we are both eager to make your acquaintance. I ask only that you be careful to avoid exciting my wife—the illness from which she suffers sometimes clouds her mind. I fear that she is currently in one of her more excitable states, and I would not see her worked into a tantrum for fear of her health."

If anyone asks about the illness, Aymon adds:
"Three years ago, Elena contracted the blue lung plague which, though she survived it, all but ruined her health and her mind. Two of our children were even less fortunate. The priests at Ania's Convent have offered to remove her affliction, but they warned that in her weakened state, the cure itself might kill her, whereas time alone would be gentler. Unwilling to risk losing my love, I turned them down, but since then, her mind has grown even more fragile. Yesterday was one of her worst episodes yet. A week ago, I sent word to the priests to take her and attempt their ritual. They should arrive any day now. I just hope I have made the right decision."



Still chatting, the baron conducts the characters into the keep and leads them to an exquisite drawing room on the third floor, where he asks them to wait.

After the characters are settled, read:
The interior of the keep offers an opulent display of the baron's wealth, with excellent statues, paintings, and tapestries. Half a dozen marble statues and paintings of the same caliber as those in the rest of the keep offer mute testimony to the baron's wealth and good taste.

Three of the statues depict the baron in heroic poses, and the others are famous mythological scenes with the baron superimposed upon them. Most of the portraits depict Aymon as a scholar in his library or surrounded by nobles in his hall, but two family portraits stand out. One shows a somber Aymon with a beautiful black-haired woman (Elena) and three children, one of whom is a young woman as striking and graceful as her parents. In the other, rendered after the plague, Elena looks like a completely different person, with streaks of white and blue in her tangled black hair. The two youngest children are absent.

Meeting Elena

A servant brings Elena to the room and quietly withdraws.

When the characters meet Elena, she says:
"I cannot thank you enough for coming. It pains me—pains me terribly—to seek your help. It's just . . . everything is so . . . so wrong! So, SO wrong. My husband is gone! He isn't here! I can't find him. I don't know where he went, and no one will help me! I've asked my daughter for help, I've asked the magistrate for help, I've asked our chamberlain, I've even asked the gardener, but no one will listen! They all insist that I'm tired and confused, and then they whisper behind my back that I'm mad! I know of your heroic deeds. I know you will find a way to help me." She smiles, her eyes pleading.

Insight DC 15: *Elena is desperate, but something in her tone or bearing also suggests that she is quite sane.*

If the heroes speak to Elena of her husband, read: *"That THING isn't my husband! Aymon is kind, caring, and loving, but whoever THAT is, it isn't my husband! He has grown stranger. His tastes are different, his clothes are different, his smell is different, and . . . the way he looks at me is different. I am certain in the way that only a woman can be that he isn't my husband! If you wish to help me, please, find out where my true husband has gone, and then everything can return to the way it should be!"*

Allow the characters to reassure Elena, question her, and begin to formulate a plan.

Delegation from the Convent

Before the characters can get all the information they want from Elena, a delegation arrives from the convent.

While the characters chat with Elena, read: *The door gently swings open. A middle-aged priest and two matronly women, all wearing robes of Ioun, slowly enter, accompanied by three sturdy warriors with symbols of Pelor on their plate mail.*

The priest softly says, "My lady, your lord husband has summoned us from Ania's Convent. We're here to escort you to—"

"No, no!" shrieks Elena. "Don't let them do this! Don't let them take me! They'll kill me if they do!"

"We intend only to help you, lady," insists the priest.

Insight DC 22: *One of the armored men scowls and looks the group over, as if assessing the opposition, while the priest speaks. Another of the warriors looks quickly to the door.*

Perception DC 22: *One priestess of Ioun wears leather armor under her robes and hides two kukris in her wide sleeves. The hiding of weapons is quite unusual for Ioun's faithful.*

Religion DC 22: *Although the warriors wear the symbol of Pelor on their armor, none of the priests wears a holy symbol openly. Such an omission is unusual for those who follow Ioun, since their religion requires them to display their faith for all to see, so that they can more readily spread knowledge.*

These emissaries are assassins clad in priestly vestments and blackguards in knightly garb, sent by Mag'hura at Uzuz's request. The plan is to spirit Elena away to a convent for recovery, but Uzuz wants her killed. In a few weeks, he expects to receive news that she has died from her disease. Mag'hura, however, intends to keep Elena alive in guild territory.

The current standoff can end in one of two ways—either a fight breaks out or the "priests" take Elena away.

Letting Elena Go

If the characters do not interfere, the "priest" speaks soothingly to Elena while the "paladins" restrain her. She struggles, but eventually relents. Unless intercepted, the assassins ride three days to a remote cave in the wilderness where they imprison the baroness, per Mag'hura's instructions.

Blowing Their Cover

Baiting the priests to demonstrate knowledge of their religion is a surefire way to pierce the ruse. Their disguises are meant to fool servants and townspeople, not to withstand close scrutiny. In addition, Mag'hura has instructed the assassins to avoid contact with the baron for the sake of plausible deniability. If the characters insist on involving Aymon, the changing situation forces their hand.

If their deception is revealed, the assassins and blackguards have instructions to kill Elena and make it look like a thieves' guild kidnapping gone awry.

If the characters persist in asking uncomfortable questions, or call in the baron, one of the disguised blackguards, who is less patient than his accomplices, mutters, "Sod it!" and attacks.

Tactics

If a fight breaks out, the assassins and blackguards try to kill Elena first, then the adventurers. They'd rather not leave witnesses behind, but if they have killed Elena, they flee as soon as one of them dies. If necessary, they dive out of windows.

Features of the Area

Furniture: The ornate, high-backed furniture in the room is difficult terrain and can provide cover.

Fireplace: The fireplace is not lit and is large enough for Small characters to stand in it.

Statues: The 12-foot-tall statues count as blocking terrain.

Pillars: Engraved roses and vines decorate the pillars, which count as blocking terrain.

Development

The baron arrives on round 5, accompanied by a small baronial entourage (see appendix) with Sir Colharan at its head. At that point, any remaining assassins and blackguards flee. If Elena is alive, Uzuz rushes to her side while his knights chase the fleeing attackers. Meanwhile, Elena tries to get away from her "husband," going as far as to threaten him with her dagger.

Conclusion

The encounter continues after the knights (and the characters, if they render aid) slay or drive off the remaining assassins and blackguards. The NPCs react as follows.

Baron Aymon: Uzuz is furious at the mess the battle has made of his drawing room, but he maintains his Aymon persona and grieves for Elena if she is dead, or with her if she is alive. He keeps his distance from her to keep her calm.

The baron thanks the adventurers for defending his wife, then asks that they leave so he can take care of her. He commands the guards to take Elena (or her body) to her chambers and any prisoners to the dungeon, and to escort the characters from the grounds.

Uzuz tolerates further discussion only if the characters repeat Elena's accusations (see "Accusing the Baron").

Baroness Elena: If Elena is holding the baron at bay with her dagger, it takes a successful DC 22 Diplomacy check to talk her down, or a character can stand between the baroness and the baron to allay her fears. Having survived the incident, Elena repeatedly mutters, "He tried to kill me. He wants me dead."

Knights: The senior knight, Sir Colharan, is with the baron and demands to know what happened. He is naturally suspicious, so passing off any half-truths or lies requires a successful DC 22 Bluff check.

Accusing the Baron

If anyone repeats Elena's accusation, the guards look incredulous, and Colharan scolds the characters for insulting the grieving lord. Uzuz graciously steps in to explain that Elena once accused a cook of being a vampire, a guard of being a doppelganger, and one of the ponies of being a mischievous shapechanger. He insists that such delusions were the primary reason that he summoned the priests. He denies any ulterior motives and proposes that the thieves' guild substituted its agents to kidnap or murder his wife.

Offering to Aid Elena

The characters might offer to escort Elena to Ania's Convent. A successful DC 22 Diplomacy check causes Uzuz to relent for fear of rousing his guards' suspicion at refusing such a generous offer. Otherwise, the baron suggests he has plenty of knights to escort her, and the characters needn't worry about her safety.

If Elena is dead, and the characters offer to resurrect her, Uzuz refuses only on a failure of a DC 22 Diplomacy check. If he does refuse, he says, "It is better, now, that she is released from her torment and is in Pelor's warm embrace." A successful DC 30 Insight check suggests coldness in these words, rather than grief or strong spiritual belief.

Even if Uzuz allows the resurrection attempt, Elena's soul refuses to return to life. The characters can take the opportunity to utilize Speak with Dead or other divinations, since they have temporary access to her body.

Questioning the Prisoners

Uzuz makes sure his knights remove any prisoners quickly for questioning. Although he remains polite, he has little need for the adventurers' help in such a matter. The prisoners reveal no useful information, so the guards conclude that the attack was a guild hit. Characters who interrogate the prisoners fare no better—the accused prefer to take their secret to the grave.

The day after the attack, a hasty trial, presided over jointly by Abduq and Uzuz, ends with a death sentence. The prisoners are to be hanged in the market square the following morning (two days after the attack).

If the characters speak with the corpses, they can learn the assassins are not from Ealding. They simply perform jobs for the guild a few times per year. Their orders come from intermediaries, and they've never met the guildmaster. They were supposed to escort Elena to a cave several miles from town and keep her there until they received new instructions. If they couldn't nab Elena, they were to kill her. They weren't to involve the baron for any reason. The assassins know nothing about the rakshasas.

Working with Sir Colharan

Sir Colharan escorts the characters out of the keep. Assuming that the heroes haven't already had a chance to speak to the knight, he asks en route what the lady summoned them for. Whether or not the characters reveal the truth, Colharan says, "I ask that you follow the lady's wishes. I trust her. She is a good woman, and despite her illness, she could command no harm on her family or subjects."

Gaining Attention

Word of the attack spreads quickly. The details are confused, as is the characters' involvement, but the other rakshasas and Gustaf Prust know soon after the battle is over.

Treasure

One of the assassins has a velvet purse. Inside it are three platinum figurines depicting kings (500 gp each) and a sapphire *gem of auditory recollection* (*Mordenkainen's Magnificent Emporium*™, page 84). The purse is a purple velvet carrier with gold thread (100 gp), but more importantly, embroidered on the outside is the image of a goblin with a hook-shaped nose swimming in a jeweled goblet with the letters "GG" sewn underneath.

All these items are important clues described in event 4.

Event 4: Follow the Clues

Roleplaying and Exploration Encounter

The assassins left behind two clues for the characters to follow: the platinum figurines and the velvet purse. These items are described more fully in this section.

Platinum Figurines

The three platinum figurines are superbly crafted, 6-inch-tall effigies of human kings. Close inspection reveals the artist's trademark and Ealding's coat-of-arms on the base of each statuette. The artist, Angva Mournhammer, is easy to find.

On the periphery of town stands Mournhammer's tidy workshop, which smells of sweat and smelted copper. There she makes jewelry and statuary with the help of a dozen apprentices. Angva is a friendly, sturdy dwarf who knows the following information.

- **Baron Aymon:** "An excellent man. I often see him and his daughter at Moradin's temple, although they come less often since the crackdown. The baron protects the people and doesn't tolerate lawless types in Ealding. He also appreciates good art; in fact, he commissioned a few statues from me recently."
- **Baroness Elena:** "That poor woman. I heard rumors that the baron was sending her away—to a convent, no less. Hopefully having someone to take care of her will put his mind at ease."
- **Figurines:** "I craft figurines out of clay or metal—mostly clay and copper though. They're just little things—children's toys and items for noble burials, mostly." (If shown the three platinum figurines, Angva confirms that she crafted them for a wealthy tiefling merchant named Gustaf Prust. Every so often he comes back and orders more figurines made from various precious metals, but not at regular intervals. The Back-Alley Bashers use the figurines as gambling tokens, but Angva doesn't know what Prust is doing with them.)
- **Gustaf Prust:** "Now there's a peculiar fellow. He's ghastly thin and always looking over his shoulder, like someone is after him. He sells magic items—rings mostly. I hear he's a powerful wizard with important connections. He's got plenty of gold anyway—I should know."
- **Back-Alley Bashers:** "I don't deal with such shady characters. They offer protection to local businesses for a monthly fee, but they know better than to grovel at my doorstep!" After a pause (assuming that the characters have been polite), she adds, "I saw the thieves' assassin—the one who tried to murder the baron a couple weeks ago—running through the street during the manhunt. He looked like an old noble or gentleman in bright armor. Not exactly the way I would have envisioned an assassin, but then, one never knows!"
- **Magistrates and Taxes:** "They run the city and pass judgment on lawbreakers. They've also raised the taxes on business owners such as myself. Fortunately, business is good. My figurines and statues are in real demand!"

Velvet Purse

The purse's only decoration is an embroidered image of a goblin in a mug, with the initials "GG" below it. Embroiderers don't typically have trademarks, and there are dozens of shops that could do such work in Ealding, so this bag has no obvious connection to one clothier over another.

A DC 15 Streetwise check yields the name of a man who knows a great deal of local lore: Allard, who spends his days at the Ealding Arms tavern. The former bandit is a convivial old codger who likes tobacco and drink.

When characters arrive at the Ealding Arms, read:
The Ealding Arms is a quiet, warm pub. Hanging over the mantle is a wooden board carved with the arms of Ealding. Near the fire sits an old man who matches the description of Allard, his crutches leaning against the table. Lines from smoke and drink crease his tanned face. He smiles and croaks in a voice that's deep and thick, "To wot do I owe the pleasure of a visit from such fine lords as yerselves?"

If the characters show him the purse, he continues:
"Oh, I know that sigil, and I'd wager more than a few bodies you asked a' fore me knew too, but I can't blame 'em for keepin' quiet. I wouldn't squeak a peep to a stranger. Good thing that don't matter none to us, though. We're friends, you an' me, and friends help each other out when they're stuck. Me, I'm stuck here till I settle a wee tab at the bar. Say, chums—convince me other pal over there that me word is sterling—maybe even put a little advance on me future expenses—an' I'll help you out with this little quandary o' yourn."

Allard knows no one else is likely to tell the characters what they want to know, and he won't say any more until he sees gold exchanged (Allard's tab is 337 sp, and 9 cp). A stingy character can haggle a 10 percent discount with a successful DC 22 Diplomacy check.

After his tab is paid, Allard thanks his new "bosom buddies" kindly. He asks a few questions about the characters—their business in Ealding, their interest in the bag, how they got it, and so forth.

When Allard is ready to reveal the truth, read:
"Now, I don't know about that bag in particular any more than you, but I do know they hands out similar ones to big winners at the Goblin's Goblet. The Goblet's a dice hall and market for hard-to-acquire items beneath the Windmill. You wanna know more about that there poke in particular, go to the Mill and order the house special—the Drownin' Hobgobbie. When you finish yer drink, ask the barkeep—a strictly business fellow name o' Anders—'Where's the goblin

in me goblet?' an' knock twice on yer empty cup. If'n 'e likes the look of you—and 'e won't as long as yer wearin' all that cutlery and steel pants—'e'll show you to the downstairs where someone's bound to know more. If'n 'e asks who sent you, it were Darrick, cause you never heard o' anyone named Allard.

"If yer goin' to the Gobbie, stow anything that'd lead folks to think you're holier-than-thou types. No one will talk to a bloke in clunky armor with glowy bits. Trust an old hand. Good luck then, young masters."

Allard knows a lot about the goings-on in Ealding, but talking is bound to make him thirsty. A bottle of excellent brandy for the table would solve that problem, and he congenially shares the bottle with the party. The bottle costs 15 gp (inflated by the new luxury taxes). Allard refuses to take this out of his advance, saying, "That's for when I'm on me lonesome, not with grand company like yerselves!"

Allard also knows the following information.

- **Baron Aymon:** "'E's decent enough . . . more genteel-like, cultured, an' la-de-da than his younger, military self. Nothin' strange there, though. A man's desires change with age an' wisdom."
- **Baroness Elena:** "A sweet, mad woman robbed of 'er youngest children an' 'er beauty. Good on the baron for keeping her, though I heard rumors 'e meant to send 'er away. It's a real tragedy wot 'appened to 'er." (Allard suspects that the Back-Alley Bashers wanted to kidnap Elena as part of a blackmail scheme to end the baron's crackdown on crime, but that idea is just pure speculation on his part. He doesn't believe for a moment that the baron would be involved in the kidnapping or murder of his wife.)
- **Chief Magistrate Milfort:** "'E's sent a lot o' unfortunate youths to slave in the mines, but you oughtn't hold a man's occupation agin' him. Truth is, though, 'e and the other magistrates are doin' well since taxes went up."
- **Olan "Split-Sides" Villers:** "She's downright hilarious, that one. Never met Ol' Split-Sides myself, but word 'as it she's got a wicked sense o' humor. She'd cut your throat as soon as look at you if'n it suited 'er though. No idea where she's livin' these days."
- **Thieves' Guild:** "The crackdown ain't worth an ogre's fart. The guild's doin' just fine, an' arrests are down. Sometimes it feels like Ealding's got more thieves than honest, taxpayin' folk."
- **Gustaf Prust:** "'E's a tiefling wizard an' merchant who makes an' sells rings. Most are trinkets, but a few hold powerful magic. Never stays in one place long, that one. I see him goin' here, goin' there, goin' everywhere—usually atop his horse around the west gate. Business must be good."
- **Platinum Figurines:** "They're playin' pieces and payouts at the Goblin's Goblet. Angva Mournhammer's handiwork." (If the characters reveal that Prust bought such figurines, Allard suggests that the tiefling must have a connection to the Back-Alley Bashers. "Maybe you'll find him in the Gobbie, then.")
- **Tancred Ironjaw/Uncle Red:** "Ah, Tancred Ironjaw—been in Lady Josselyn's life since she was born. Part o' the Ironclad Company, a group o' heroes from 'while back. 'E visited a few months ago. Don't recall tell o' him leavin', and 'e was wont to stop inta the Arms for a dram or a pint. In fact, a pal o' mine, Jackon, who's a servant at the manor, says the horse Ironjaw rode in on outstayed its master." (Allard also knows the information from event 2 about the Ironclad Company, up to DC 25.)

Event 5: Meet the Magistrate

Roleplaying Encounter

This event typically occurs between events 4 and 6, though character actions might cause it to happen at a different time.

A courier delivers an envelope bearing the wax seal of the Chief Magistrate. Hugh Milfort wants to speak to the characters about the attack on Lady D'Tabart. The courier knows no other information.

If the characters go to the meeting, read:

A tall, marble vestibule leads into a wood-paneled courtroom decorated with tall marble statues. The invitation's instructions indicate that the chief magistrate's office lies through a door to the left of the bench.

When the characters enter the door, read:

The door opens to reveal a study lined with shelves full of books, and a man in rich but not overstated clothes writing at a desk. Several dwarf warriors—mercenaries rather than town guards—stand along the walls. A pale female human in dark robes, hood raised, sits in a comfortable chair near the magistrate's desk, leafing through a book.

The man at the desk takes a moment to finish what he is writing, then he sets down the quill and smiles wanly. "Thank you for coming," he says. "These are sad circumstances in which to meet. Lady Elena is a dear and personal friend of mine. She introduced me to my wife years ago, so I'm making inquiries on her behalf.

"Sir Colharan told me the results of the watch's investigation thus far. He says you were with Elena during the attack and fought her assailants. You've since had some time to look into matters a bit, and I was hoping to hear your thoughts on this affair. From where I sit, this seems to be an open and shut case—Elena was simply caught in the middle of her husband's crusade against the thieves' guild. Would you agree?"

Abduq believes he can earn the characters' trust, and he hopes this invitation will allay their concerns. He wants to know if they intend to stick around, what their thoughts are on the situation, and what they've turned up. Most importantly, he wants to know if they have heard any other information that might throw suspicion onto the town leaders.

If the characters share Elena's story, Abduq expresses utter disbelief, claiming that Elena is deeply troubled and easily confused. If the characters seem intent on helping Elena, Abduq tries to allay their concerns by agreeing to "get to the truth of the matter." He assures the characters that he and his agents will handle the investigation discreetly. He then thanks the characters for taking such an interest in Elena's affairs and expresses his hope that he has put their minds at ease.

As Hugh Milfort, Abduq shares the following information.

- **Platinum Figurines:** "They're quite nice, but they don't mean anything to me. Many local artists make similar objects. Where did you find them?" (Abduq honestly doesn't know anything about the figurines.)
- **Purse:** "The pattern's ugly, but the quality is good. Where is it from?" (Abduq knows that the embroidered image is the emblem of the Goblin's Goblet gambling hall. A successful DC 30 Insight check detects the brief look of recognition on his face. If confronted with that information, Abduq says, "I was hoping you knew more than I do. A bag like this was found on a guild thief we captured a while ago.")
- **Baron Aymon:** "An excellent—albeit headstrong—leader, and a good husband and father. This thought might sound strange coming from a magistrate, but I wish Aymon were less cavalier about the Back-Alleys. The guild has become too bold of late."
- **Baroness Elena:** "A lovely friend cursed with misfortune."
- **Thieves' Guild:** "I've taken a strong stand against crime in Ealding. I shall see every Back-Alley Basher hanged or sent to the quarries before long." (A successful DC 22 Insight check reveals that Milfort is posturing, and that he may harbor doubts about the effectiveness of the recent crackdown—an allegation he denies. In fact, he's simply annoyed with how Mag'hura is running the guild.)
- **Angva:** "A rising star among artists. The baron recently purchased several statues from her, and other nobles have been quick to follow suit."
- **Allard:** "Ah, yes, I remember that name. He was one of my first cases as magistrate. We knew he was a bandit and murderer, but we had little evidence. I sentenced him to time in the quarry. I hear he's cleaned up his act—the justice system at work."
- **Mercenaries:** "A sad but necessary precaution. One of our magistrates disappeared recently, and I don't intend to follow in his footsteps."
- **Gustaf Prust:** "I believe he's some sort of traveling trader who deals in commissioned magic items. No criminal record I'm aware of. Why?" (A successful DC 30 Insight check detects the brief look of displeasure on Milfort's face at the mention of Prust, suggesting that the magistrate does know the tiefling. If the characters believe they have enough evidence to suggest Gustaf Prust was involved in the attack on Elena, Milfort promises to have him brought in and questioned. It would be highly irregular for outsiders to be present at such a meeting, so he requests that the heroes not attend. Prust evades this capture long enough for the characters to meet with him first, but he's likely to hide in the Goblin's Goblet to avoid pursuit.)
- **Tancred Ironjaw/Uncle Red:** "A mighty warrior and friend to the baron. He visits from time to time but always seems to have business elsewhere." (Milfort claims to have no idea where Tancred is now, insisting that he left the town months ago. A successful DC 30 Insight check detects the brief look of anger on Milfort's face at the mention of Tancred. Abduq is displeased that Tancred is still alive, but he remains evasive on the point if pressed, saying, "I think Ironjaw should render more service to the baron—he's almost family to the D'Tabarts. Josselyn loves him dearly, but he's always on the move.")

When the characters leave the office, read:

The magistrate rises from his chair, walks to the door, and opens it.

"Thank you for coming. As I said before, this matter is important to me personally. If you come across any more information you think relevant, I would consider it a personal favor if you let me know before anyone else."

Development

Abduq wants the characters to see him as an ally and to return to him with information they gather. He is likely to use whatever the characters reveal to him against them. Although he prefers subtle obstruction, he's willing to go any distance to protect himself. For instance, Abduq is likely to decide Prust is dead weight if the characters disclose that they're meeting with the tiefling.

If the heroes assault Abduq, the magistrate's mercs (see appendix) defend him as he flees. If desperate, he might awaken the two statues in the courtroom as marble golems. Within 2d4 rounds, however, 1d6 + 1 Ealding guards and an Ealding squire arrive to aid the magistrate's mercs in subduing the characters.

Conclusion

Outside Hugh's office, the gallery is filling with an audience for a trial. Ondomar is entering, trailed by six town guards escorting a prisoner. A character with passive Perception of 22 or higher recognizes among the gawkers a human male wearing the garb of a page and clutching a parcel. The character remembers that this man (Towser) was at the keep the morning of Elena's assault. At this time, he is carrying innocuous official letters between the baron and the magistrate.

Event 6: Investigating the Investigators

Roleplaying or Combat Encounter

Mag'hura sends a thief gang (see appendix) to watch the characters. The passive Perception DC to spot these observers is 22. These spies have orders only to observe. The characters can lose the tail with a DC 22 group skill check using Stealth. Pointing out loiterers to the guards grants a +4 bonus to this check, because the guards delay the spies. Nonviolently confronting the spies also scares them off for a time.

If the characters use force first, they are in the wrong. The Bashers call for help from the town guards while defending themselves. Within 2d4 rounds, 1d6 + 1 Ealding guards and an Ealding squire arrive to break up the fight.

Event 7: The Search for Gustaf Prust

Roleplaying Encounter

Evidence suggests that Prust was involved in the attack on Baroness Elena, but his motive is unclear. Gustaf knows the adventurers are being watched, so he won't speak to them openly in public.

Prust has abandoned his shop for the time being, but the characters may want to go there first. From there, go to event 8 or 9, depending upon where the characters decide to search for him, and to event 11 when they find him.

Prust's Shop

Gustaf's shop consists of a small office, which he uses to meet clients, and a workshop. During the investigation, the shop stays locked, and Gustaf never returns to it. Breaking into the shop is easy (Thievery or Athletics DC 22 to pick the lock or break in, respectively).

Notable items inside include trunks of old documents that look as if they have been moved here hastily. (They were in Prust's home before he sold it.) Perusing the documents reveals regular payments to the West Gate Stables.

The workshop is clean and contains nothing of value except a small pile of spilled residuum (50 gp). The pile sits atop a loose floorboard (Perception DC 22 to notice), under which is a notebook detailing Prust's work on the rings for the rakshasas.

Event 8: West Gate Stables

Prust uses the stables around the west gate regularly. The characters can encounter him there if they spend a day or so waiting, or if they employ a lookout to report his arrival there.

Event 9: The Windmill

The Mill is an unassuming tavern serving a low-budget clientele. The barkeep is a thick, red-faced man named Anders who got his position for his perceptiveness.

Towser

During mealtimes, any character who has a passive Perception of 22 or higher recognizes Towser among the patrons. He is a human male wearing the garb of a page. The character remembers that this man was at the keep the morning of Elena's assault, and at the court during the trial they saw beginning after the meeting with the magistrate.

Towser is eating a mince pie and grinning foolishly to himself. A leather parcel sits near his elbow. If the characters watch for a while, Anders invites him to the back room for a special pie, and he agrees, picking up the parcel. Towser leaves the Mill a few minutes later. He's carrying innocuous letters at the moment, but he later carries important evidence.

The Signal

If the characters give the signal Allard described, Anders spends a moment sizing them up. If they look too well armed and ready for battle, he plays dumb. Only the right roleplaying ("Look, gold is gold, and your boss knows better than to turn away coin.") and a DC 22 Bluff or Diplomacy check gets him to acknowledge the signal. Threats and a DC 15 Intimidate check also do the trick.

If Anders acknowledges the signal, he whispers to the characters to meet him in the shack behind the Mill in 10 minutes. If he believes the characters mean no harm, he discretely warns the ogre guards that he is coming with guests by tugging on a hidden string under the bar. If the characters had to cajole him into acknowledging the signal, he says, "No weapons allowed in the Goblin. Check 'em with the guards." When the characters leave, he tugs the string twice so the ogres know to collect any weapons the characters have. Intimidation or violence causes Anders to relent immediately, but he tugs the string three times to let the guards know the characters are trouble.

Entry Shack

Inside the shack behind the Mill are tools, scrap wood, and a well.

Illumination: Bright light from torches on the wall.

Well Elevator

A character who has a passive Perception of 22 or higher notices that the well has no cranks or buckets. The well is 5 feet wide, as is the platform for descent into it. Its shaft descends to a hollow 60 feet down, ending 20 feet above the floor. Climbing down the narrow shaft should be easy, except that its walls and the chains are greased to help the platform move easily (Athletics DC 25 to climb).

Guardpost

Roleplaying or Combat Encounter (Level 10; 2,700 XP)

Anders drops a rock down the shaft, and the characters hear it clank below, followed by a rattling sound (the chains that raise the elevator platform). After the platform arrives, Anders leaves the shack.

Five humans and two ogres wait in the hollow below. If Anders gave no warning, the thieves continue their game of cards while the ogres work the elevator. If warned about weapons, the ogres and thieves surround the well landing, and an ogre grunts "weapons on table" as each person arrives.

When all is in order, the humans unlock the door and lead the characters past the armory and down a tunnel that leads to the Goblin's Goblet and the market warren. They ask the characters to stop after walking down the tunnel for 2 minutes, and one human moves ahead into the darkness and lets the guards at the secret door know the characters are allowed in. She comes back a minute later, and says, "The Goblin's straight ahead."

Characters who refuse to hand over their weapons can leave by going back up the shaft, or face a fight. The watch gang includes two ogre taskmasters, two Back-Alley catchers, and two Back-Alley drifters. If the characters fight but back down before killing anyone, the thieves charge them a fine of 250 gp per character for the violence, then let them go back up the shaft. If the characters kill any of the guards, the thieves fight to slay the characters. If the fight goes badly, the thieves try to retreat up the shaft, but they don't flee to the tunnel that leads to the armory and the Goblin's Goblet.

Furniture: The table and chairs are difficult terrain.

Treasure: An ogre carries the key to the locked door that leads to the armory and the tunnel to the Goblin's Goblet. The other ogre has the key to the armory chamber, which contains many mundane weapons and armor. The room also contains fifty-eight novelty figurines similar to those that the characters found on the assassins. Most are copper, but several are silver or electrum, and a few are gold or platinum. Assign theses figurines the treasure value that fits your campaign. The characters might also find a magic item or two here.

Locked Door

The door separating the armory and the security area is locked (Thievery DC 30 to pick).

Event 10: The Goblin's Goblet

Roleplaying or Combat Encounter (Level 17; 8,100 XP)

The tunnel from the well leads to an apparent dead end concealing a secret entrance to the Goblin's Goblet.

Secret Door

If the guards know the party is allowed in, they open the secret door as the characters approach. Otherwise, the guards have retreated into the Goblet, and the secret door here requires a DC 30 Perception check to find. Once found, the door can be identified as being of dwarven make with a successful DC 15 Dungeoneering check.

Opening the door requires dismantling it from the outside, a task that requires three successful DC 30 Thievery checks.

The Festhall

The secret door opens into a large hall for drinking, dining, and gambling. Everburning torches light the hall without smoke or heat. Above the inner side of the secret door hangs a wooden sign carved with the likeness of the goblin and goblet (the same emblem that was embroidered on the velvet purse).

The tables nearest the bar are for drinking and eating, and the tables in the next tier are for low-stakes gambling—except the center table, which is the show table for high-stakes gambling. The curtained rooms are for private meetings and games.

At any time, day or night, the hall is full of servers and patrons. The latter are from various walks of life and in various states of drunkenness.

If the characters got here through violence, however, the hall contains only guards, most of whom are hidden in private booths, ready to spring an ambush.

Figurines

If the characters came here peacefully, they can easily see that patrons trade figurines at the bar, and gamers use them to gamble at the tables. Each figurine is worth, roughly, fifty coins of the same metal.

Picking a Fight

A large number of thieves and cutthroats spend time in the Goblet. Counting the guards outside the secret door, as well as those in the black market (see "Black Market"), at least two thief gangs (see the appendix), two shadow assassins, and two ogre taskmasters are in the area. Mag'hura might also join in a fracas here (raising the XP total to 9,300), since her allies are likely to overwhelm the characters. Unless Mag'hura's true nature has been revealed, the thieves show no mercy to anyone who starts a lethal fight in the Goblet.

Olan's Office

The southwestern bedroom on the map is Olan's office, but Mag'hura is here only when she wants to be Villers. Otherwise, she moves about as an anonymous wealthy patron, gambling her own money at her tables. If the characters ask for a meeting, the bartender says the appointment fee is 100 gp, and any meeting requires a waiting period of at least three days, during which guild personnel will check out the petitioner.

The Black Market

A limestone cavern near the Goblet serves as a black market. The cavern is a shallow dome containing a waist-deep lake with a gravel island in its center. On the island are a dozen stalls selling different goods for the thieves. The ogres mentioned in "Picking a Fight" patrol the island under the direction of an assassin.

If the characters arrive here after a lethal combat in the Goblet, the merchants are collecting their wares and fleeing to one of the tunnels that lead to the wilderness outside Ealding. Any merchant knows all the information from the "Current Events" section of event 2.

Event 11: Contacting Prust

Roleplaying Encounter

The characters can meet Prust at the stables, or somewhere in the Goblin's Goblet, or at the Black Market. He's unwilling to talk openly in public, and if addressed in such a situation, he rebuffs the characters as strangers. If the characters are insistent, he hisses "Not here!" through his teeth.

The characters must devise a way to get a message to Prust without anyone observing the exchange. Prust knows time is running short, so he accepts any meeting place suggested, except the private rooms in the Goblet, since he knows those rooms are not at all private. He's unwilling to accompany the characters

anywhere, since he knows that being seen with them is a sure way to end up dead.

Reprisals

Confronting Prust prompts action from one of the rakshasas: Mag'hura if the characters met Prust in the black market, Uzuz if the characters were openly suspicious of him during Event 2, or Abduq if the characters let an incriminating remark slip during event 5. Whichever rakshasa is the most concerned assigns agents to tail the characters. Mag'hura assigns Back-Alley Bashers and, perhaps, an assassin or two. Abduq sends his mercenaries, who might end up fighting the characters. Uzuz uses knights and squires, but gives them orders to let the characters be.

In any case, Prust is wily enough to know that the characters are being watched.

Meeting

Wherever the characters ultimately meet Prust, he's finally ready to spill the beans.

When Prust is willing to talk, read:
Prust's deep-set cat's eyes twinkle, and he breaks into a broad, almost skeletal smile. "You got me!" he says. "I set it up. I arranged to have Elena killed. But we both know I didn't make that decision, and we both know that you want that person, not me. It just so happens that I want out of my current situation, and that person won't allow me to leave, meaning he's got to go. Let's make a deal."

Let the characters respond, then continue:
"You know it was the master of the thieves' guild, Splitsides, and I'm guessing by now you've figured out she has other friends in high-up places. Let me go, and I give you all of them. That's the gist of the deal, although I have a few caveats. Sound fair so far?"

Let the characters respond, then continue:
"If I'm going to help you, I can't allow any chance that word of it will ever get out. These people realize that what I know is dangerous to them. Worse, they don't miss anything, and they never forget. If even a suggestion ever gets out that I helped you, in any way, I'm worse than a dead man. Even if you kill them, their friends can chase me, and they won't just kill me when they catch up. I'm not like you—I can't fight off assassins, and I don't want to spend my life always looking over my shoulder.

"Unfortunately for you, that means I can't tell you who they are or why they're doing this. They're watching you, and if you suddenly wise up and run straight for what you need without going through the motions of discovering things on your own, they'll smell a rat—and I'm the only rat, see? If you don't look in every way the part of heroes who solved this on their own, the signs point to me, and that arrangement is not acceptable. What I can do is tell you exactly where to go to pick up the trail.

"Those are my conditions. In exchange, you get to find those who attacked Elena. Do we have a deal?"

Only Tancred, of whom Prust has no knowledge, knows as much as he does. The tiefling knows he's the end of the line for connecting everyone involved, and he points this fact out. He requires the characters to swear an oath to meet his demands.

If the characters agree and swear the oath, read:
"None of these people trusts the others. Each one keeps evidence connecting themselves to their counterparts in case of betrayal. Catch one and you catch them all. The problem is getting this evidence. It's undoubtedly someplace close, secure, and hidden.

"Your foes are unparalleled in their ability to escape justice. You'd have to be amazingly shrewd and lucky to get this evidence and confront them, so you have to make them want to meet you halfway. Luckily for you, I've been working on setting up such a situation for months.

"They have a courier—a simpleton named Towser. Watch him. See where he goes. After that, try to grab whatever he's carrying. It's bound to contain some information you need.

"The best advice my master ever gave me about magic was, 'You know what you need only when you realize what's missing. Then you use magic to fill the gap.'

"Sorry for the riddles, friends, but you need to be convincing in your discovery of the truth. I can't make the truth whole for you.

"So here's another one: Three rings facilitate three lies, and they keep the truth asleep inside. But it's no use crying over residuum spilled in my workshop.

"And one final riddle for them and you: Does a cooperative witness resist a citizen's arrest, or is it the guilty criminal that does?

"I hope you won't let a criminal escape final justice."

With that remark, Prust eats a dark lozenge, and then attacks the characters. Even if they don't kill him, he falls "dead" a moment later. (The timing is up to you, but he wants to take damage from the characters.) He is not in fact dead, but under the effect of a magical substance that induces a deathly trance lasting for seven days. While in this state, Prust appears to be dead, but he is aware of his surroundings. He can emerge from the trance as a free action. A successful DC 30 Heal check or Insight check, made as a standard action, is required to determine that Prust's state is not death, although the character receives a +4 bonus to this check for having witnessed Prust taking the lozenge.

Treasure

Prust has a ritual scroll, burnt around the edges, that contains the Make Whole ritual. He also has a ritual scroll of Disenchant Magic Item bound by three rings of gold cloth.

Aftermath

After Prust's body is retrieved, the magistrates confiscate what's left of the tiefling's wealth for the town. They then execute his will, which stipulates that his body must be sent to his hometown (a settlement of your choice) for burial. Prust stays for a month in a family mausoleum while the characters resolve the situation. Having squirreled away a small fortune and taken his revenge on the rakshasas, he never returns to Ealding.

Event 12: Silent Night

Combat Encounter Level 11 (3,000 XP)

During a long rest after Prust's "death," assassins strike the characters. This encounter takes place wherever the characters are resting, while most or all of them are asleep.

Monsters: 5 shadow assassins.

The assassins try to sneak up on the characters and coup de grace sleeping characters first. Hearing or spotting the assassins requires a successful DC 25 passive Perception check, modified for the character's location and whether the character is sleeping (–5) or distracted (–2).

Event 13: Proof Beyond Doubt

Roleplaying, Exploration, and Combat Encounter

Three methods exist for unmasking the rakshasas.

Searching for Evidence

As Prust suggested, the characters can search for evidence in town, but doing so is a hit-or-miss proposition. The task also requires confronting a rakshasa without convincing its allies that something is amiss. Therefore, depending on the timing, the characters are likely to face resistance from some town authorities.

Uzuz hid incriminating correspondence between himself and the other rakshasas inside a hollow statuette in the scribe's office within the baronial house. A successful DC 30 Perception check allows a character to find the hollow while searching that room.

Mag'hura keeps such correspondence in a watertight chest hidden 5 feet underwater in the lake outside the black market. Finding the chest takes a successful DC 30 Perception check and a few hours of searching around the island. Mag'hura keeps her key on her person at all times. Opening the chest without the key requires two DC 30 Thievery checks.

Abduq carries a letter instructing the reader to examine the statues in the courthouse foyer. Any search uncovers a latched compartment in one statue's heel. A successful DC 22 Arcana check to detect magic reveals that the statues are magical. If anyone other than Abduq opens the compartment, all six statues activate as marble golems. A successful DC 30 Arcana (trained only) or Thievery check allows the characters 1 minute to open the compartment without awakening the golems. If the compartment is still open after the duration lapses, the golems animate and attack.

Finding Towser

Asking around about Towser reveals that he is a simpleton who does odd jobs in town and can be found almost anywhere. He takes most meals at the Mill. Most people consider Towser to be a surrogate family member, so no one who distrusts the characters is apt to help them find him.

Any description given might, depending on whether the characters noticed Towser before, reveal that the party has already seen him. When the characters find Towser, they remember seeing him in other places, even if they didn't spot him at the time.

Tailing Towser

Towser has no chance to realize that the characters are tailing him. He has a usual routine, moving between the keep and the courthouse with missives, and taking more information to and from the Mill just after mealtimes. He stops occasionally to help other townsfolk with various minor tasks.

If the characters wait to see where Towser takes his packages, he delivers them to a magistrate, the baron's chamberlain, or Anders. None of these characters is willing to give the party mail intended for the town leaders except under serious duress.

Intercepting Towser

If the characters stop Towser, they may be able to convince him to let them deliver his letters. Doing so takes a successful DC 22 Bluff or Diplomacy check, but the character receives a +4 bonus to the roll if he or she offers Towser a gift or tasty food. Towser gives up his letters to anyone who succeeds on a DC 15 Intimidate check against him, but he bellows and weeps at any such mistreatment. Nearby townsfolk might come to his aid, and he's likely to remember his tormentor.

Finding the Evidence

In Towser's parcel are real letters between the baron and magistrate about city governance—typically three to five per delivery. The missives are official briefs and writs sealed in wax, with nothing incriminating. Such documents offer no proof of wrongdoing, but the letters—given Prust's hints—do give the characters good reason to suspect Milfort.

A message that has the baron's seal reads:
Despite the enmity you bear my former company and me, I beg for the mercy of death as a release from the baron's unbearable punishments.

In addition to the intact letters is an envelope that contains ash and scraps from paper that has been burned. The rakshasas write out a message on the paper, then burn it so only the blank margin or a corner remains. The recipient then uses the Make Whole ritual to access the message again.

Given Prust's clues and treasure, a character trained in Arcana might realize the significance of the ash and scraps in the envelope. If the players don't figure it out, a successful DC 15 Arcana check allows a character to understand the riddles and the ruse.

This letter, from Abduq to Mag'hura, reads:
Prust is dead, the watch tells me—slain at their hands. I didn't think the interlopers had it in them to kill a man in cold blood, but I saw the body when they brought it to me at court. At least the fool stayed quiet to the end.

Why are they still alive? They come closer every day, and your useless assassins have done nothing. With Gustaf gone, we have no way to recreate our rings. As it is, Uzuz may have to abandon the baron.

Take care of this now, or I will—even if it means chasing them through the streets like the last one. We can deal with loose ends afterward.

–A

Written on the back in a different hand is:
Uzuz has been too careless. If he must dispose of the baron, he could replace him with the heir. He's had plenty of time around her to learn her habits the old way, if he hasn't been lazy. That way, we would retain the barony, at least.

The interlopers will succeed soon.

Do not chide me when you are foolish enough to invite the outsiders to a private audience. I am not so addled as to leave myself unprepared for your faithlessness. That old man you allow Uzuz to keep in the dungeon is a greater liability than any of my failings.

Kill Ironjaw and be done with it before you harangue me about my part in this.

–M

A successful DC 22 Insight check allows a character to discern that the handwriting on both notes, though different, slants as though the writing hand was at a backward angle. The clues come together with a successful DC 25 Nature check, with which a character intuits that the foes are rakshasas. Give the players a brief description of these monsters.

Using Tancred

After capturing Tancred, Uzuz revealed his true form and gloated over the hero's fall. The rakshasa occasionally retires to the dungeons even now to torture his old enemy.

Tancred is an alternative and reliable source for information about the baron. Freeing him is difficult, because torture has crippled the elderly man to the point that a Remove Affliction ritual is necessary to let him move at full speed and fight without being weakened.

Getting to old Ironjaw for a talk is easier. If the characters tell Josselyn that Tancred is in the baronial dungeon, she is dismayed enough to look. Otherwise, the characters must devise a way to sneak into the keep's lower level.

Tancred knows the rakshasas keep evidence as insurance against betrayal, because that's what they did last time. He explains that the Ironclad Company lured one of the rakshasas away and sneaked into its lair to find the evidence. Then they used the stolen evidence as bait to force a confrontation in which they killed the rakshasas.

If the characters can clean Tancred up properly so that an elderly citizen of Ealding could recognize a distinguished hero from the town's past, then his testimony against the rakshasas is enough to rouse public support.

Event 14: Behind the Masks

Roleplaying and/or Combat Encounter Level 13 (4,800 XP)

The characters now have many options, but they basically boil down to either revealing the rakshasas to the town, or privately confronting them.

Rallying the Town

With the proof in hand (especially if the characters have the letter and Tancred Ironjaw), the characters can easily convince most reasonable NPCs in the town that evil beings are posing as town leaders. The suggestion that rakshasas are involved gives any of the normal folks pause, however. None of them want to face such monsters, and they are all shrewd enough to know that the creatures will attempt to escape if they can.

Taking on each rakshasa separately is possible, but the creatures are likely to flee as described in "Running the Adventure." Although the characters can attack Uzuz directly without intervention from knights or guards (presupposing that Sir Colharan and/or Josselyn know the truth), both Abduq and Mag'hura retain their protectors.

Revealing the rakshasas' identities publicly without confronting them directly means the rakshasas can easily escape the characters and guards, as described in "Running the Adventure." They flee Ealding to regroup elsewhere and plot revenge against the heroes in the future.

After the characters have chased the rakshasas out of Ealding, one of the magistrates steps up to succeed Milfort, and Josselyn ascends to her father's position. The leaders offer the characters a reward for returning their rightful leaders to power. The new leaders reward the characters as you see fit, but it should be a smaller reward than the rakshasas offer in "Handling Matters Personally."

Handling Matters Personally

The characters have several options for getting the rakshasas's attention. If the heroes reveal that they know the truth to any of the rakshasas without letting those facts become public knowledge, the rakshasas see an opportunity to eliminate the threat and then maintain their façade.

Monsters: Abduq (rakshasa mage), Mag'hura (rakshasa archer), and Uzuz (rakshasa warrior), 2 marble golems

Mag'hura uses a Sending ritual, saying:
"We wish to negotiate. We have generous terms. Come to the courthouse, alone, at midnight. If any townsfolk learn the truth, our captives die."

The players can respond with up to 25 words, as permitted in a Sending ritual.

When the characters go to the meeting, read:
In the wood-paneled courtroom sit a dozen tiger-headed humanoids—some in the mezzanine above the gallery, several at the bench, wearing the robes of magistrates, and others guarding the speaker's floor. Their hungry, yellow eyes glimmer with intelligence.

One of the rakshasas seated at the middle bench stands up and speaks.

"Fabulously done. This cat-and-mouse game has been most entertaining—a quality this place sorely lacks. We can guess what you want, and if we are correct, we cannot oblige you. But we can make you very, very rich.

Here is the deal we offer: You leave every shred of evidence you have about us here, leave this town forever, and we give you 25,000 gold pieces in coin and gems, as well as two magic items. We can even have the city throw in a monument to glorify your heroic defense of Baroness Elena.

"Refuse at your peril. We have walked the earth and died before. Slay us, and we will return. We remember everything from all our lives, and we shall return to life someplace new, with a reason to hate you personally. We

will then work to dismantle your lives and any record of your existence. You see, you cannot win. So we suggest that you accept the truth and take your spoils.

"What is your choice?"

Arcana (Trained Only) or Perception DC 25: *Most of the rakshasas here are illusions. Only three are real.*

If the characters see through the illusions created with Silent Image rituals, tell them that the speaker is a real rakshasa. Another on the speaker's floor is real, as is a female on the mezzanine.

The characters can negotiate for more riches, but the rakshasas are unwilling to accept any deal that removes them from power or frees the captives.

If the characters agree, the rakshasas hold up their end of the bargain only if the characters turn over any evidence they have. Such a turnover must include Tancred Ironjaw if he is no longer in the dungeon.

If the characters refuse, the rakshasas attack. Abduq uses a minor action on his turn to activate the marble golems (the statues in the courtroom), assuming that the characters have not yet discovered and destroyed these golems.

Development

If close to defeat, any of the rakshasas reminds the characters of its immortality and its intention to avenge itself.

If Abduq falls unconscious or dies, his golems return to their pedestals and become inactive.

Features of the Area

The chamber has the following features.

Illusions: If the characters fail to spot the illusions before combat begins, nine additional rakshasas should seem to be present. Place them on the map as if they were real. An illusion disappears if physically interacted with in any way.

Magistrates' Bench: The bench is blocking terrain 4 feet high.

Pews: The pews are difficult terrain. They offer cover as if they were blocking terrain 3 feet high.

Concluding the Adventure

If the characters defeat the rakshasas, they must still deal with the magic rings that Prust forged for the creatures. Freeing a prisoner from a ring requires the Disenchant Magic Item ritual, and it returns 5,000 gp in residuum, or 12,500 gp in residuum if the disenchanter allows the prisoner to perish while the item is disenchanted.

Once the monsters are gone, the town rewards the characters as if they had decided to reveal the creatures, as detailed in "Rallying the Town"—in other words, slightly less than the amount of the bribe the rakshasas offered.

Whether defeated or not, the rakshasas avenge themselves upon the characters later if they can. Assassins hound the characters, and the rakshasas take pains to make life hard for the adventurers.

The characters also receive special XP awards as noted below.

Remove the Rakshasas

The characters receive 1,000 XP each if no rakshasa remains in power after the adventure ends. Double this reward if the characters imprison the rakshasas instead of slaying them.

Elena Saved

If the characters saved Elena, they each receive 150 XP, plus an additional 150 if they took the time to escort the baroness to safety in Ania's Convent or to some other safe place.

Innocent Blood

Award the characters 150 XP each if no innocents died during the investigation. Deny them this reward only if an innocent died in a way that the characters had a chance to prevent.

About the Author

Once a biochemist, **Alexander Winter** had a fellowship in Asia to research video games, and he's been on a wild adventure since. He also worked on *Murder in Baldur's Gate* for Wizards of the Coast and is building his soon-to-be-revealed website. Alexander enjoys D&D, travel, dancing like a robot, and a good mystery.

Appendix 1: Sudden Encounters

This section offers guidelines to help you improvise encounters that might arise as the characters investigate the mystery, as well as statistics for all the monsters.

Overly bold characters might run afoul of certain groups of townsfolk. In some cases (Event 6, for instance), the groups can be mixed.

Baronial Entourage

Combat Encounter Level 12 (3,500 XP)

Uzuz uses Baron Aymon's forces. His entourage usually includes two Ealding knights and two Ealding squires, along with five Ealding guards. If Uzuz joins in a fight alongside his men, he uses none of his illusion powers, but raises the Encounter Level to 13 and the XP to 4,700.

Magistrate's Mercs

Combat Encounter Level 12 (3,600 XP)

Abduq uses mercenaries from a shadowy cabal the rakshasas often employ. His protectors include at least one shadow mage and four shadow berserkers. If he joins a fight alongside his mercs, he can bring his full power to bear, increasing the Encounter Level to 14 and the XP to 5,000.

As Milfort, Abduq prefers to avoid using knights that could tie him to Elena's assault and assassins that could tie him to that attack and to the Back-Alley Bashers. Instead, he's willing to call on Ealding squires and Ealding guards to supplement his mercenary forces.

Thief Gang

Combat Encounter Level 10 (2,850 XP)

On the job, the thieves travel in packs of seven members (a lucky number). A typical gang includes three Back-Alley catchers, two Back-Alley drifters, and two Back-Alley bullets. These thugs prefer ambush and hit-and-run tactics to a standup fight.

Town Watch

Combat Encounter Level 7 (1,500 XP)

The typical watch patrol includes one or two Ealding squires and five Ealding guards. Each patrol member has a signal whistle to summon another patrol that arrives on the scene within 1d4 minutes. Occasionally, a patrol includes an Ealding knight, increasing the Encounter Level to 10 and the XP to 2,500. Frequent assaults on town guards make it more likely that knights start to join the patrols.

Appendix 2: Monster Statistics

Shadow Assassin **Level 11 Skirmisher**
Medium shadow humanoid, human XP 600

HP 113; **Bloodied** 56 **Initiative** +12
AC 25, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 23 **Perception** +11
Speed 6 Darkvision

Traits

Unerring Focus
The assassin never takes penalties to attack rolls it makes against its prey. If the assassin takes radiant damage, this trait no longer functions (save ends).

Standard Actions

Kukri (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +16 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 10 damage, or 3d6 + 10 damage if the target is the assassin's prey.

Sunder from Sight (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Effect: The assassin uses *kukri.* On a hit, the target also takes ongoing 5 damage and cannot be seen or targeted by its allies (save ends all).

Minor Actions

Shadow Prey ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Ranged sight (one creature); the assassin designates the target as the assassin's prey until the assassin uses this power again or until the end of the encounter.

Triggered Actions

Shadow Leap (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy other than the assassin's prey attacks the assassin.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The assassin teleports up to 6 squares to a square adjacent to its prey.

Skills Acrobatics +15, Athletics +10, Stealth +15
Str 11 (+5) **Dex** 21 (+10) **Wis** 12 (+6)
Con 17 (+8) **Int** 11 (+5) **Cha** 19 (+9)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment leather armor, 2 kukris

Shadow Knight **Level 10 Soldier**
Medium shadow humanoid, human XP 500

HP 105; **Bloodied** 52 **Initiative** +10
AC 26, **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 23 **Perception** +6
Speed 5 Low-light vision

Traits

Furious Assault
The knight scores a critical hit on a roll of 19-20 against an enemy that has one or more of the knight's allies adjacent to it.

Standard Actions

Greatsword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 7 damage.
Effect: The target is marked by the knight until the end of the knight's next turn.

Shadow Smite (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature marked by the knight); +15 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 10 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Minor Actions

Shadow Call (necrotic) ✦ **Recharge** when the knight starts its turn immobilized or restrained and without an enemy adjacent to it
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +13 vs. Will
Hit: 1d10 + 5 necrotic damage, and the knight pulls the target to a square adjacent to the knight.

Triggered Actions

Shadow's Rebuke (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy within 10 squares of the knight and marked by it makes an attack that doesn't include the knight as a target.
Effect (Free Action): Close burst 10 (the triggering enemy in the burst); 10 necrotic damage, and each of the target's allies adjacent to it takes 5 necrotic damage.

Str 21 (+10) **Dex** 17 (+8) **Wis** 12 (+6)
Con 17 (+8) **Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 18 (+9)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment plate armor, greatsword

Baroness Elena D'Tabart **Level 7 Controller**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP –

HP 72; **Bloodied** 36 **Initiative** +2
AC 19, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 20 **Perception** +10
Speed 6

Traits

Protected
Elena gains a +2 bonus to all defenses while she is adjacent to an ally.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 3d4 + 6 damage.

Urge Hesitation (charm) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Close burst 5 (enemies in the burst); +10 vs. Will
Hit: The target cannot take a standard action during its next turn.

Skills Diplomacy +11, Insight +10
Str 7 (+1) **Dex** 9 (+2) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 8 (+2) **Int** 15 (+5) **Cha** 17 (+6)

Alignment good **Languages** Common
Equipment noble clothes, dagger

Ealding Squire **Level 10 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 500

HP 103; **Bloodied** 51 **Initiative** +8
AC 26, **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 22 **Perception** +8
Speed 5

Traits

Formation Fighter
The squire gains combat advantage against an enemy if any ally has combat advantage against that enemy.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Longsword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 9 damage.
Effect: The target grants combat advantage until it hits the squire with an attack (save ends).

Minor Actions

Shield Bash (weapon) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature granting combat advantage to the squire); +15 vs. Fortitude
Hit: The target falls prone.

Triggered Actions

Pursuing Shield Bash ✦ Recharge when first bloodied
Trigger: An enemy starts its turn adjacent to the squire but ends its turn not adjacent to the squire.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The squire shifts up to its speed and uses *shield bash* against the triggering enemy.

Str 18 (+9) **Dex** 12 (+6) **Wis** 16 (+8)
Con 15 (+7) **Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 13 (+6)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment scale armor, light shield, longsword

Ealding Knight **Level 10 Elite Soldier (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 1,000

HP 208; **Bloodied** 104 **Initiative** +9
AC 26, **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 22 **Perception** +12
Speed 6
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits

Formation Fighter
The knight gains combat advantage against an enemy if any ally has combat advantage against that enemy.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Bastard Sword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 9 damage.
Effect: The target grants combat advantage until it hits the knight with an attack (save ends).

Minor Actions

Rally Point ✦ Recharge ⚄ ⚅
Effect: Close burst 5 (allies in the burst); the target can shift up to half its speed.

Shield Slam (weapon) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 7 damage, and if the target is granting combat advantage to the knight, the target falls prone.

Triggered Actions

Pursuing Shield Slam ✦ Recharge when first bloodied
Trigger: An enemy starts its turn adjacent to the knight but ends its turn not adjacent to the knight.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The knight shifts up to its speed and uses *shield slam* against the triggering enemy.

Skills Athletics +14, Diplomacy +13
Str 19 (+9) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+7)
Con 16 (+8) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 17 (+8)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, bastard sword

Ealding Guard **Level 10 Minion Brute**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 125

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +6
AC 22, **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 21, Will 22 **Perception** +7
Speed 5

Standard Actions

Halberd (weapon) ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +15 vs. AC
Hit: 11 damage, and if the guard has combat advantage against the target, the target falls prone.

Crossbow (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 15 (one creature); +15 vs. AC
Hit: 11 damage.

Str 16 (+8) **Dex** 13 (+6) **Wis** 15 (+7)
Con 14 (+7) **Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 10 (+5)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment chainmail, halberd

Back-Alley Catcher **Level 8 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 350

HP 87; **Bloodied** 43 **Initiative** +8
AC 24, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 20 **Perception** +7
Speed 6

Traits

Alley Advantage
An enemy that has any of the catcher's allies adjacent to it grants the catcher combat advantage.

Alley Agility
The catcher ignores difficult terrain that consists of rubble, debris, uneven pavement, furniture, or similar terrain.

Standard Actions

Club (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 9 damage.

Ground Pound (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** when enemy adjacent to the catcher falls prone
Attack: Melee 1 (one prone creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 3d6 + 9 damage, and the target cannot stand until the end of the catcher's next turn.

Minor Actions

Net Drag (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +11 vs. Fortitude
Hit: The catcher pulls the target up to 2 squares.

Triggered Actions

Staggering Retaliation (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the catcher moves away from it or makes an attack that doesn't include it as a target.
Attack (Immediate Interrupt): Melee 1 (the triggering enemy); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 9 damage, and the target falls prone.

Skills Acrobatics +11, Athletics +13, Stealth +11
Str 19 (+8) **Dex** 14 (+6) **Wis** 17 (+7)
Con 15 (+6) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+4)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment leather armor, club, net

Back-Alley Drifter **Level 9 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 400

HP 95; **Bloodied** 47 **Initiative** +11
AC 23, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 21 **Perception** +8
Speed 6

Traits

Alley Advantage
An enemy that has any of the drifter's allies adjacent to it grants the drifter combat advantage.

Alley Agility
The drifter ignores difficult terrain that consists of rubble, debris, uneven pavement, furniture, or similar terrain.

Standard Actions

Quarterstaff (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 8 damage, and the drifter can slide the target 1 square.

Spinning Knockdown (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Attack: Close burst 1 (enemies in the burst); +12 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d8 + 8 damage, and the drifter slides the target up to 2 squares and knocks it prone.

Move Actions

Staff Vault ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
Effect: The drifter jumps up to its speed, moving vertically or horizontally. It provokes opportunity attacks for leaving only the square from which it begins this movement.

Skills Acrobatics +14, Athletics +12, Stealth +14
Str 16 (+7) **Dex** 20 (+9) **Wis** 18 (+8)
Con 15 (+6) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 12 (+5)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment leather armor, quarterstaff

Back-Alley Bullet **Level 10 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 500

HP 82; **Bloodied** 41 **Initiative** +10
AC 24, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22 **Perception** +9
Speed 6

Traits

Alley Advantage
An enemy that has any of the bullet's allies adjacent to it grants the bullet combat advantage.

Alley Agility
The bullet ignores difficult terrain that consists of rubble, debris, uneven pavement, furniture, or similar terrain.

Standard Actions

Sling Sap (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 8 damage.

Ricochet Shot (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 15 (one creature); +17 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage, and another creature within 3 squares of the target takes 5 damage.

Bullet Rain ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Effect: The bullet makes two basic attacks.

Triggered Actions

Vengeful Bullet ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy hits the bullet with a ranged or an area attack.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The bullet uses *ricochet shot* against the triggering enemy.

Skills Acrobatics +15, Athletics +11, Stealth +15
Str 12 (+6) **Dex** 21 (+10) **Wis** 18 (+9)
Con 16 (+8) **Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 10 (+5)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment leather armor, sling, 40 bullets

Shadow Mage **Level 14 Controller (Leader)**
Medium shadow humanoid, shadar-kai XP 800

HP 115; **Bloodied** 57 **Initiative** +9
AC 28, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 28 **Perception** +7
Speed 6 Darkvision

Traits

Sapping Shadows ✦ **Aura** 3
When a slowed enemy ends its turn in the aura, it takes 5 damage and the mage gains 5 temporary hit points.

Standard Actions

Sickle (fear, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 13 damage, and the mage pushes the target up to 2 squares.

Life Siphon ✦ **Recharge** if the power misses
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +17 vs. Will
Hit: 2d6 + 13 damage, and ongoing 10 damage (save ends). Until the target saves, whenever it takes the ongoing damage, the mage gains an equal number of temporary hit points.

Shadestorm ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +17 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d8 + 12 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the mage's next turn.

Minor Actions

Life Transfer ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Close burst 5 (one ally in the burst). The mage transfers 5 or 10 temporary hit points from itself to the target.

Skills Arcana +16, Intimidate +18
Str 11 (+7) **Dex** 14 (+9) **Wis** 11 (+7)
Con 20 (+12) **Int** 18 (+11) **Cha** 23 (+13)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment chainmail, sickle

Shadow Berserker **Level 12 Brute**
Medium shadow humanoid, dwarf XP 700

HP 120; **Bloodied** 60 **Initiative** +10
AC 24, **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 23 **Perception** +9
Speed 6 Darkvision

Traits

Vital Rage
While the berserker has temporary hit points, it scores a critical hit on a roll of 18-20.

Standard Actions

War Pick (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +17 vs. AC
Hit: 2d12 + 12 damage.

Life Cut (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** if the power misses every target
Attack: Close burst 1 (enemies in the burst); +17 vs. AC
Hit: 2d12 + 12 damage
Effect: If the berserker hits two or more targets, the berserker gains 20 temporary points.

Triggered Actions

Bloodied Feast ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: An enemy bloodies the berserker.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The berserker shifts up to its speed + 2 to a square adjacent to the triggering enemy. *Life cut* recharges and the berserker uses it with a +2 bonus to the attack rolls.

Skills Athletics +17, Intimidate +11
Str 22 (+12) **Dex** 19 (+10) **Wis** 16 (+9)
Con 20 (+11) **Int** 10 (+6) **Cha** 11 (+6)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment hide armor, 2 war picks

Marble Golem — **Level 10 Soldier**
Large natural animate (construct) — XP 500

HP 75; **Bloodied** 35 — **Initiative** +8
AC 25, **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 22 — **Perception** +8
Speed 7 — Darkvision
Resist 5 to all damage

Traits

Loose Stonework ✦ Aura 2
The aura is difficult terrain for enemies.

Plodding
The golem cannot shift.

Standard Actions

Slam ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +15 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 10 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the golem's next turn.

Stone's Clutches ✦ Recharge ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); +13 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d8 + 5 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends). If the target is already slowed, it is instead immobilized (save ends).

Str 21 (+10) **Dex** 12 (+6) **Wis** 16 (+8)
Con 17 (+8) **Int** 3 (+1) **Cha** 3 (+1)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Ogre Taskmaster — **Level 11 Soldier**
Large natural humanoid (giant) — XP 600

HP 117; **Bloodied** 58 — **Initiative** +9
AC 27, **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22 — **Perception** +6
Speed 8

Traits

Threatening Reach
The ogre can make opportunity attacks against enemies within 3 squares of it.

Standard Actions

Spiked Chain (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +16 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 10 damage.

Entangling Chain (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +16 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 5 damage, and the target is restrained and takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends both). While the target is restrained, the ogre cannot use *entangling chain* or *threatening reach*, and the ogre's melee range decreases to 1 square.

Minor Actions

Bully ✦ At-Will (1/round)
Effect: The ogre slides an ally up to 3 squares.

Str 21 (+10) **Dex** 14 (+7) **Wis** 12 (+6)
Con 21 (+10) **Int** 6 (+3) **Cha** 6 (+3)
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Giant
Equipment hide armor, spiked chain

Uzuz (Baron Aymon) — **Level 15 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, rakshasa — XP 1,200

HP 142; **Bloodied** 71 — **Initiative** +13
AC 31, **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 26 — **Perception** +16
Speed 6 — Low-light vision

Standard Actions

Longsword (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +20 vs. AC. The rakshasa makes two attack rolls and uses either result.
Hit: 2d8 + 7 damage, and the rakshasa marks the target until the end of the rakshasa's next turn.

Claw ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +20 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage, and ongoing 10 damage (save ends).

Minor Actions

Deceptive Veil (illusion) **✦ At-Will**
Effect: The rakshasa disguises itself to appear as a Medium humanoid until it uses *deceptive veil* again or until it drops to 0 hit points. Other creatures can make a DC 35 Insight check to discern that the form is an illusion.

Illusory Ambush (illusion) **✦ Encounter**
Effect: The rakshasa becomes invisible, and an illusion of it appears in its square. The transition is indiscernible to observers, and the illusion lasts until the start of the rakshasa's next turn or until a creature attacks the illusion. After the illusion appears, the rakshasa shifts up to its speed.

Triggered Actions

Tiger Pounce (teleportation) **✦ At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy marked by and within 5 squares of the rakshasa shifts or makes an attack that does not include it as a target.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The rakshasa teleports up to its speed and uses *claw* against the triggering enemy. If *claw* hits, the target also falls prone.

Str 20 (+12) **Dex** 18 (+11) **Wis** 18 (+11)
Con 14 (+9) **Int** 12 (+8) **Cha** 14 (+9)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment scale armor, heavy shield, longsword

Mag'hura (Olan Villers) **Level 15 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid, rakshasa XP 1,200

HP 110; **Bloodied** 55 **Initiative** +12
AC 28, **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 25 **Perception** +16
Speed 6 Low-light vision

Standard Actions

Claw ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +20 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Longbow (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +22 vs. AC. The rakshasa makes two attack rolls and uses either result.
Hit: 1d10 + 9 damage.

Double Attack ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The rakshasa uses *longbow* twice, making each attack against a different target.

Ghost Arrow (necrotic, weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +20 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d10 + 18 necrotic damage, and the target cannot spend healing surges (save ends).

Minor Actions

Deceptive Veil (illusion) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The rakshasa disguises itself to appear as a Medium humanoid until it uses *deceptive veil* again or until it drops to 0 hit points. Other creatures can make a DC 35 Insight check to discern that the form is an illusion.

Triggered Actions

Illusory Escape (illusion) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
Trigger: An enemy makes a ranged attack against the rakshasa.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The rakshasa becomes invisible, and an illusion of it appears in its square. The transition is indiscernible to observers, and the illusion lasts until the start of the rakshasa's next turn or until a creature attacks the illusion. After the illusion appears, the rakshasa shifts up to its speed.

Str 17 (+10) **Dex** 20 (+12) **Wis** 18 (+11)
Con 14 (+9) **Int** 12 (+8) **Cha** 14 (+9)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment longbow, 20 arrows

Abduq (Hugh Milfort) **Level 16 Controller**
Medium natural humanoid, rakshasa XP 1,400

HP 153; **Bloodied** 76 **Initiative** +10
AC 30, **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 28 **Perception** +11
Speed 6 Low-light vision

Standard Actions

Claw (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 3d6 + 10 damage, and the rakshasa teleports the target up to 3 squares.
Miss: The rakshasa can teleport the target 1 square.

Misleading Visions (illusion, psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Area burst 1 within 5 (enemies in the burst); +19 vs. Will
Hit: 2d10 + 11 psychic damage, and the rakshasa slides the target up to 4 squares.
Miss: The rakshasa can slide the target 1 square.

Visions of Terror (illusion, psychic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Area burst 1 within 5 (enemies in the burst); +19 vs. Will
Hit: 3d10 + 13 psychic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).
Miss: Half damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the rakshasa's next turn.

Minor Actions

Deceptive Veil (illusion) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The rakshasa disguises itself to appear as a Medium humanoid until it uses *deceptive veil* again or until it drops to 0 hit points. Other creatures can make a DC 36 Insight check to discern that the form is an illusion.

Persistent Image (illusion) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The rakshasa creates an illusion of a Medium or smaller object or creature in an unoccupied square within 10 squares of it. The illusion can be animate, but it does not produce noise. The illusion lasts until the end of the rakshasa's next turn. A creature that succeeds on a DC 22 Insight check can see through the illusion.
Sustain Minor: The illusion persists until the end of the rakshasa's next turn, and the rakshasa can move the illusion up to 6 squares.

Str 12 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+10) **Wis** 16 (+11)
Con 17 (+11) **Int** 24 (+15) **Cha** 21 (+13)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common

Gustaf Prust **Level 14 Controller**
Medium natural humanoid, tiefling XP 1,000

HP 137; **Bloodied** 68 **Initiative** +8
AC 28, **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 27 **Perception** +8
Speed 6 Low-light vision
Resist 15 fire

Standard Actions

Hell Rod (fire, implement) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +17 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d12 + 6 fire damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends). A target adjacent to Gustaf always fails the saving throw.

Soul Fire (fear, fire, implement, psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (creatures in the burst); +17 vs. Reflex
Hit: Ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends), and the first time the target willingly moves closer to Gustaf before the end of its next turn, it takes 10 psychic damage.
Miss: Ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Move Actions

Baleful Teleport (teleportation) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Effect: Before the attack, Gustaf teleports up to 10 squares.
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +17 vs. Will
Hit: Gustaf teleports the target to the square he just left.

Triggered Actions

Fiery Transposition (fire, teleportation) ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: An enemy within 10 squares of Gustaf hits him with an attack.
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): Close burst 3 (creatures in the burst). Each target takes 10 fire damage, and then Gustaf and the triggering enemy teleport, swapping positions.

Skills Arcana +17
Str 11 (+7) **Dex** 12 (+8) **Wis** 13 (+8)
Con 17 (+10) **Int** 20 (+12) **Cha** 23 (+13)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment leather armor, rod

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